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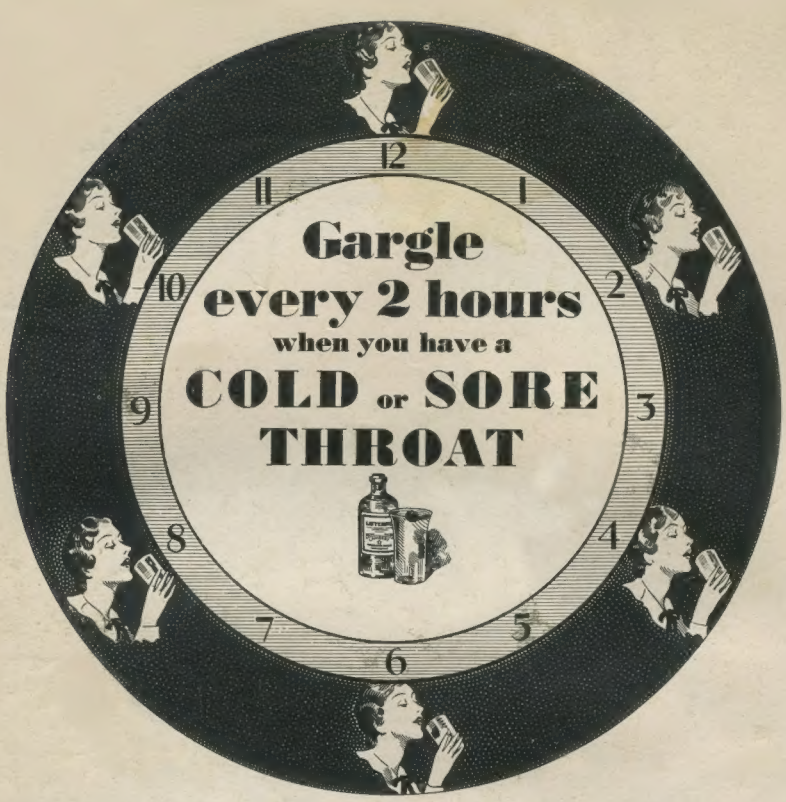

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CALIBAN

A Tale of the Caribbean

By F. R. BUCKLEY

IT WOULD have been no use—I allude to the proverb—to yell "Hi, Mac!" down the engine room hatch of the *Vulture.* Nobody would have dropped a wheel wrench; nobody would have said the traditional "Aye?" in Aberdonian. She was a four thousand ton American ship whose owners had views about things, and her three engineers were named Hemmingway, Brady and Tonks.

As for the chief, his name was Mr. McDowell.

He had, of course, been called other names than this, especially since he had replaced easy going Sanderson on the *Vulture;* but never to his face, and never anything that even rhymed with Mac. His subordinates called him sir when he was present; and when they met on upper platforms—generally under his eye, but out of his earshot—called him long names picked up on various waterfronts and elaborated during watches when Mr. McDowell was asleep and nothing had gone wrong enough to wake him. Brady and Tonks, sweating on the middle platform to tighten a packing nut seemingly already tightened to its limit, were calling him these names now. From the footplate, his back against the fuel pump, Mr. McDowell was watching them, unwitting.

He was a huge man—too huge for his present clothes; too huge and too mightily muscled, indeed, for any clothes he had ever been able to get. Over his thighs his dungarees stretched with the tightness of doeskin breeches; his shoulders, despite the perennially unbuttoned condition of his clothes, had usually a burst seam or so to their discredit; and from their respective cuffs his wrists and ankles, ending in enormous hands and feet, projected in unconcealed knobbiness. Above all which came a bull neck, a face reminiscent of a damaged bust of Nero, and red hair, graying and thinning as a man's hair does at sixty. A Caliban of the engine room.

"Are ye gettin' weak?" he inquired in a voice that beat down the suave efforts of the crank pit.

Brady came to the edge of the platform.

"We've tightened it as far as she'll go," he said.

"You've no' moved it. I've got a bearin' on the handle of that wrench an' it's no' moved."

Brady spoke through his teeth.

"If you want us to shear the nut, sir," he said, "we'll tail on an'—"

With an astonishing agility the chief engineer was beside him. One of his vast hands snatched the wrench from Tonks; the other applied its jaws to the nut; the bulging shoulders leaned forward; a seam burst, and the nut revolved a quarter turn. Looking at his juniors in a way which made Tonk's teeth, in their turn, set tight together, Mr. McDowell dropped the wrench and wiped his hands on cotton waste.

"If you'd stop your hell raisin' in Port Antonio," he said, "maybe we wouldn't have the engines fallin' to pieces every time I'm not on watch myself. Now check the other nuts. I'm goin' up."

And up he went, a slouching figure followed by objurgations he could not hear—up to his cabin in the port alleyway just aft of the messroom where, noon and night, he ate with youngsters who talked to each other only. His screen door was

locked; he unlocked it, let it slam behind him, and sat down in his shabby armchair. He did not look around him; there were no pictures on his walls. He was a naturalized American citizen, which ruled out, to his mind, the portraits of royalty; he had voted against President Hoover; and no one in his life had ever dreamed of giving him a photograph.

There stood over the writing table the usual gages—said by Brady, against all reason, to have been installed by the chief at his own expense for the torment of juniors—and over the settee a blueprint of the ballast tank layout, and over the berth an oil company's calendar marked with the dates from the blowing down of boilers. Ignoring all of which amenities, Mr. McDowell grunted and took off his boots. He was just reaching for a pair of elastic sided slippers when the screen door squeaked open and slammed shut in one and the same second, admitting the first officer, white with rage.

"Look here, McDowell—"

The chief engineer rose, one slipper in his hand.

"I didn't hear ye knock," he rumbled.

Head down, gray eyes savage behind bushy red brows, he looked like a bull moose at bay; but the first mate was beyond zoology.

"Damn knocking! I—"

"For two pins I'd put ye outside, Mister Scanlan. I'll have my door respected. Hear me?"

The first mate's voice, after a moment of silence, was almost inaudible. Now his lips were pale, like the rest of his face, and his hands were trembling.

"You'll—? Listen, McDowell. You've monkeyed around with me enough. I'm here from the captain this time. You so much as lay a finger on me and, by the Lord, I'll have the shackles on you. It's about time you got taught a lesson."

"You knock at my door when you want me," said the chief engineer, unmoved. "Understand that. Now what else d'ye want?"

"I want the starboard No. 1 davit fixed, same as I've wanted it fixed for the last three days."

"I've sent ye men twice—"

"Well, they haven't fixed it, and I want it fixed, not monkeyed with. What's more, so does the captain—and we don't want any more apprentices. The captain says you're to fix it—and right now. I suppose you're not goin' to?"

There was a deadly alternative in his voice, which Mr. McDowell disregarded much as he ignored the threat of irons; much, indeed, as he seemed to disregard everything outside of the engine room. He seated himself, put on the slipper he held, groped for the other and donned it and his uniform cap.

"G'wan," said he; and without further remarks followed the first mate up the ladder to the boat deck.

The *Vulture* was driving her white bow through a sea still blue, in her path, with the translucent daytime hue of the Caribbean. To the east, where an island showed a white lighthouse, red roofed houses and a palm fringed shore, the blue was darker with the shadows of the coming night. Broad on the starboard beam, a segment of red sun, still visible above the horizon, flung a bridge of fire across the western ocean, and turned the white clouds of day into a pageant of armies with banners.

Under the port bow three porpoises threaded their black backs in and out of the white lace of the bow wave; ahead of them flying fish engraved the calm water with spreading triangles; and over the stern the last seagull wheeled, swept downward and settled on the edge of the wake.

To these phenomena of nature Mr. McDowell paid no attention; nor did his psyche warn him that the day marked by them—indeed, the quarter of an hour so marked—was to be one of the two decisive periods of his life. All he saw was a Swedish carpenter looking stupidly at the davit crank; and all he thought was that deck officers were even more incompetent than engineers.

"Well?" he demanded of the carpenter.

"Vell, she von't turn. Maybe she's rusted."

"Rusted?" snarled Mr. McDowell. "How the hell can a bronze thread rust?"

He stepped forward, glanced at the launching mechanism in the quickly failing light, seized the crank as he had seized the wrench from Tonks, and pushed on it. It did not move. The chief engineer's shoulders bulged; another seam burst with a splitting crack—and the crank gave. Turning toward the first mate, Mr. McDowell revolved the screw easily with one hand.

"Isn't there a man aboard?" he inquired heavily. "I've been fetched for almost everything on this ship. Now it's to be stuck screws."

"Yes, but why was it stuck?"

The chief engineer regarded the carpenter with a sullen eye.

"Maybe you been puttin' shavings in it," he said. "Or one of them swell dames some of us bring aboard in port left her vanity case in it."

"Look here—" said the first mate.

"I'm goin' to see," added Mr. McDowell, staring fixedly at the carpenter and fumbling for a flashlight.

With which words he walked around the bow of No. 1 boat, stumbled on a ringbolt and went head first over the side.

"Well, for cry—" said the first mate.

He kicked off the slippers he was wearing. The carpenter, running to his side, set up an agonized bellow in Swedish.

"Call it 'man overboard', dummy," said the mate, throwing his coat aside, "an' chuck us a buoy."

Whereat he too was gone, with a long jump that set him clear of the side-wash and let the screw, lashing its eighty beats a minute thump past him three yards away. Shaking the water out of his eyes and swimming over to where the propeller current could give him a boost on his way, he reared up as high as he could in the water, peering along the ship's track for the black object that would be McDowell; and behind him, as he did so, he heard the distant steering engine of the *Vulture* stammer its way across the quadrant.

The second officer, on watch, had put the helm hard over—going to locate them by the end of the ship's turning circle. Sensible fellow. The first officer, his mind relieved from all but an uncomfortable thought of sharks, put his head down and burrowed northward through the water in search of the chief engineer.

He found him; indeed, arms and legs going furiously, he ran over him, as a destroyer has been known to run over a submarine in the act of coming to the surface. With this difference, that the first mate undertook his own salvage operations. Reaching down, he seized Mr. McDowell's hair with his left hand, hauled him to the surface and, as the chief engineer's jaw broke the surface of the water, greeted him with a savage right to the button. He knew the chief engineer could not swim, and he was taking no chances; indeed, had not the water stayed his arm, or had the recipient of that punch been some one else, there would have been no further chances to take.

As it was, Mr. McDowell coughed violently, removing about a pint of sea water from his bronchi, and smote Mr. Scanlan grieviously on the side of the head. He then sank again, and the business was to be recommenced.

IT WOULD be an exaggeration to say that there, in that excessively watery stadium, and between a drowning man and a swimmer whose clothes were slowly but surely dragging him down, there was staged a regular fist fight, the rounds marked by Mr. McDowell's disappearances beneath the surface; but it is fact vouched for by the boatswain and two quartermasters, who came in a boat to pick up the rescuer and the rescued, that at first the scene revealed by the *Vulture's* cargo lights resembled more than anything a fight between killer whales.

One of Mr. Scanlan's eyes was closed; he had a cut over the other; his shirt had

been half torn off by a hand which had not been too careful of the skin underneath; and from the nose of the chief engineer ran a stream which incarnadined the foam in which they struggled.

Hauled into the boat by the scruff of their respective collars, however, they fought no more. Mr. Scanlan sat in the stern sheets and breathed heavily, his head in his hands; Mr. McDowell lay down in the bottom and became unconscious.

Indeed, he remained so for three or four hours, only waking when Tonks attempted artificial respiration, and asking that young gentleman either to go back on watch or else to hell; but he was less drowned than exhausted, and by two bells he had recovered his poise. At ten P. M, clad in his best black shore going suit over a pair of blue flannel pajamas—of course the coat would not button and he was wearing no shoes—he presented himself at the first mate's door and knocked. He knocked several times, and at last entered, without invitation, dubiously. It was at this moment that Mr. Scanlan awoke in his turn. The two men eyed each other, and it is to be suspected that the twitch of Scanlan's jumbled features was intended for a grin.

"Now who's come in without knocking?" he inquired.

Mr. McDowell stared at him.

"I did knock," he said crustily. "Bein' asleep, ye didna hear me, belike."

The first mate's jaw hardened.

"Oh, all right. Did you want something?"

The big man by the door swallowed something. Then he opened his mouth, swallowed something again and spoke with difficulty. Such was the rasp of his voice, and such the unwillingness of his words, that it would have taken a smarter man than the mate—and one with more Scots blood in him—to know what Mr. McDowell had in his heart.

"I wish to thenk ye," he said with difficulty. "For savin'—"

He stopped.

"—for swimmin'—after me."

"Oh, that's all right."

"If it was me—banged ye up like that—"

"Not so much you, as that damn flashlight you hung on to. I could have managed you but for that."

"Ye think so?" asked Mr. McDowell, staring down at the carpet. He looked up again. "Well, anyhow—thenks." He looked down again. "I didna know what I was doin'."

He examined the carpet and traced a cabbage rose with his big toe. There was a silence during which the first mate wondered if he had been challenged to renew the fight on shipboard, and Mr. McDowell perspired slightly about the cheeks. Finally he raised his head and regarded the first mate with what Scanlan took to be a scowl.

"Well, I'll be goin' along," said the chief engineer.

He turned, put his vast hand on the doorknob and turned back. Once more he opened his mouth; once more he swallowed; once more he said nothing.

He went.

II

AND that is the end of the adventurous or action section of this narrative. In the ensuing chapter you will find no gales, no torrents, nothing carried away—unless one excepts gales of profanity and torrents of perspiration, and the loss at sea of something which nobody knew was on board anyhow. It was something for ignorance of which no member of the crew need be blamed—not even Mr. Scanlan, whom it most concerned; seeing that it was invisible anyhow, and additionally concealed beneath several layers of clothing and a very thick skin, within the bosom of the chief engineer. It came nearest to discovery—within a million miles—when Mr. Scanlan, transferred to the *Eagle* as captain, found that Mr. McDowell had been transferred with him.

Not altogether pleased, he dropped down to the engineer's cabin—a smaller, barer room than he had had on the

Vulture—and hammered on the door. Mr. McDowell appeared, in the process of shaving.

"Ye needna have knocked," he said, walking back to his mirror.

"I got hell last time for not knocking!"

"Aye."

Uninvited, the new captain took a seat. He did not know that, ever since the *Vulture's* last voyage and the news of his promotion, Mr. McDowell had been besieging the port engineer with requests for a transfer—requests which, the *Eagle* being the staggering old coaster that she was, had caused the port engineer to doubt Mr. McDowell's reason. Wherefore, twisting his cap in his hands and coughing, Mr. Scanlan said it was a shame and that if the chief engineer liked he would make representations.

McDowell turned around and stared through his red eyebrows.

"What's a shame?" he demanded harshly.

"Well, I mean this is a raise for me, but a man of your standing—"

"Ye mean ye don't want me?"

"Did I say so?"

Scanlan got up. He was rather pale.

"This is my first command, and I want the best engineer I can get, naturally. But I'll tell you something, McDowell. You lay off me, see? I'm not going to have you picking fights with me all the time, get that?"

McDowell's hands, one holding the razor and the other a rather soiled towel, made a small groping movement which might have been well understood—if not thought eloquent—in Aberdeenshire. The captain didn't notice it.

"I'm not talking about what happened last trip," he said. "Right today I came down here to be friendly, and within thirty seconds you're putting words into my mouth and trying to start a row. All right, go bite yourself. We sail at seven this evening."

After he was gone the chief engineer stood for a moment motionless; then, with care, he wiped the razor on the towel, stropped it with a rather slower motion than usual and put it away. He next dried his brush and soap and put them away likewise; after which, with peculiarly careful fingers, he extracted his dungarees from a vast valise—he was not yet unpacked—and put them on.

In the engine room, where Tonks, transferred with him willy-nilly as Second, had been telling tales of horror to the new Third and Fourth, he seemed abstracted for the rest of that afternoon; to such an extent that the juniors accused Tonks of being full of hooey. Mr. McDowell, at the moment of the accusation, had climbed slowly back up the ladder, without noticing any of a dozen things which should have roused him to fury.

"You think so, do you?" asked Tonks. "Well, that's fine. His liver's out of order today, or something—and I hope it stays that way. I've had enough of Mr. Andrew McDowell, Esquire. I been picked on enough. An' when it comes to yanking me out of the *Vulture* into this—"

He described the *Eagle* with words not found in "Lloyd's Register".

"What'll you do about it?" asked the Fourth.

"Never you mind," said Mr. Tonks darkly. "I know when I'm on watch an' when I'm off; and if any Scotch person of dubious ancestry thinks I don't—"

Which was put to the test when, twelve hours out of Port James for New Orleans with a general cargo, the *Eagle* snapped her propeller shaft between the second and third collars of the thrust.

It was not a sensational performance.

For a few moments—Mr. McDowell was at breakfast in the cuddy, sitting silently across the table from Mr. Scanlan—the antiquated engines, free of their load, shook the ship violently with their racing; then Tonks spun the throttle wheel; a little steam drifted up through the engine room skylight and disappeared in the torrid sunshine; and the *Eagle*, the foam round her forefoot diminishing as she slowed, lay helpless but otherwise safe on the blue sea.

Mr. McDowell, sliding down the ladder

and pinching his chin thoughtfully as he started at the thrust, turned to find the captain behind him.

"What's up?"

"She's snapped her shaft, that's all. There's no danger."

"My God! All! With towage—Can you fix it?"

Mr. McDowell revolved on his heel and faced the commander. It almost seemed as though, for the first time within the memory of man, he was going to smile. But he didn't smile; and Captain Scanlan failed to see the look in his eyes.

"Look here," he said, "we've no wireless, McDowell. That'll mean losing time here till we get a tow, and paying through the nose. This is my first command. You know the company—"

"Aye. An' if ye go back to Port St. James, the insurance'll be canceled, an' the ship'll be laid up, an' there'll be demurrage or whatnot on the cargo. Whereas if we make New Orleans, I'll get a bonus from the underwriters."

"Can you patch her up?"

"Ye'll carry on to New Orleans?"

"Oh, damn your bonus—Yes!"

"Ye will?"

"Yes. I—"

"Then if you'll get back to your own department," said Mr. McDowell, the smile quite gone from his eyes and the shade of eagerness from his voice, "we'll see what we can do. Tonks! You, Braithwaite! Get the forge lit."

NOW THE engineer who told me this story was a Chesterfield compared with the subject of the yarn; but he was a Scotsman and a mechanic, so when I suggested that repairing a twelve-inch shaft broken in the thrust must be a fearful job, he naturally said that it was the simplest thing in the world. He added the word "theoretically"; and proceeded to draw diagrams on paper.

The thrust, it appeared, was an arrangement of bearings which, engaged with half a dozen collars on the propeller shaft, took the shove of the propeller and communicated its forward drive to the boat. All one had to do, therefore, in the event of a break between collars, was to take the thrust-block down, bore eight or ten holes through the two-inch steel of the collars on each side of the break, make bolts long enough to connect the collars, remove the corresponding shoes, against which the bolt headed collars could not turn, and go on one's way dead slow but rejoicing. Theoretically. In practise—as Mr. McDowell's juniors found out—and particularly in the case of the *Eagle*, there were other considerations.

The heat of the engine room, for instance; it was July, and the thermometer at the foot of the engine room ladder showed mercury up to the mark of 110°. Then there was the forge at which, under the bitter supervision of his chief, Tonks was requested to cut and thread ten steel bolts, what time Mr. McDowell and the two juniors toyed with the thrust block. This was not a pleasant business.

The builders of the *Eagle*, in the pride of their Victorian craftmanship, had apparently scouted the idea that work of theirs might need repairs; and especially they had put a curse upon any who should interfere with their thrust. So that any one who, while sweating to remove heavy parts which had to be maneuvered through spaces too small for them, so far forgot himself as to straighten up, brought his skull necessarily and resoundingly against a sharp edge of the shaft tunnel; allowing (it happened to the third engineer) the weight then being lifted to smash two of his lifting companions' fingers.

It was—not to go into Mr. McDowell's summary prevention of a fight, and his dressing of the wounds with cotton waste—five o'clock in the afternoon before the thrust was stripped enough for the hole boring to start; and but for the McDowell muscles it would have been later. He had smashed a finger, too, and the sharp edge of something had given him a nasty cut across the palm of the hand. He had had nothing to eat since breakfast, he was black with oil and

sweat; and his only garment was a union suit, severally burst by his efforts.

"Get the big hand drill, Braithwaite," he said, panting and surveying the broken shaft.

"Aren't we—"

"Aren't we what?"

Braithwaite of the cut head sat down on the low pressure crank guard. He, too, was black from head to foot; he gleamed; he was naked except for a bandanna loin cloth and a pair of patent leather shoes. Taylor, the Third, was in much the same condition; Tonks, stepping over from his forge, showed a face reddened by the fire and a singed chest.

"Aren't we going to have a spell-o, sir? I'm pretty near all in."

"Ye can—" McDowell looked at his assistants with contempt—"ye can have ten minutes. Don't go runnin' around the deck though. Ye might catch cold. An' bring me that drill before you lie down."

Naturally they didn't lie down. There was nowhere to lie down in the engine room, and they had neither the time nor the inclination to climb the ladder. They sat at the forward end of the engines, as far as they could get from the point whereat Mr. McDowell, scowling, was marking the holes to be drilled, and they cursed in low, exhausted voices.

"You were goin' to do a rebellion, weren't you?" one of them asked wearily of Tonks.

"Yeah, and—" said the second engineer; at which point Mr. McDowell called them.

"A hole apiece," he said. "You first, Tonks. You others—"

"We haven't had ten minutes."

"You've had a rest. That's more than I have."

"I'm off watch. I've done ten hours today."

McDowell laid down the hand drill.

"Yes?" he growled.

"Yeah, an' I'm not goin' to—"

They were all a little mad, probably; anyhow, at this point and without further speech, Mr. McDowell launched a blow which, had it landed, would have robbed him of his most valuable helper, and which only missed by millimeters. Then Tonks, snatching up one of the bolts he had forged, advanced with the visible intention of committing murder on his chief; which Taylor and Braithwaite endeavored to prevent by hurling themselves one at the second and the other at the chief engineer, who rewarded their interposition with grievous bodily ills.

Within thirty seconds the whole engine room staff of the *Eagle* was on the steel deck, rolling about amid the discarded collars and the cinders from the forge, fighting everybody in general for no particular reason. It was probably the heat. Taylor and Braithwaite, the peacemakers, found themselves possessed of a lust to tear pieces off Mr. McDowell, who in turn seemed intent on the methodical strangling of Tonks against the fuel pump.

For some minutes there was general confusion, dominated by the immobile back of the chief engineer; then this landmark collapsed and, with a grunt of fury, Tonks struggled on top.

"Now, you—" he said, poising his knee above the chief engineer's solar plexus. Then something about the angle of McDowell's head struck him, even in his rage, and he paused.

"Had enough?" he asked grimly, expecting but one answer, and bracing himself for the physical convulsion that should go with it. But there was no reply for a moment; and when it did come it was not the response he had expected.

"Yes," said Mr. McDowell. "Enough. Let me up."

He arose slowly, looking away from the three subordinates who stared at him with dropped jaws. He seemed to be trembling. For forty years he had ruled his engine rooms by terror; now he had confessed defeat in a fight he had started. He knew what his victors were thinking, and he knew what it would mean for the future.

"There's something I want to say to you," said the chief heavily. "If this

ship gets to New Orleans under her own power there'll be a bonus for the engineers."

He struggled with a difficult continuation.

"Rush this job so we can get in before any weather makes up, an'—you can have my share."

The three regarded one another. Coaxing from McDowell! Bribes!

"What'll you get out of it?" demanded Taylor.

Mr. McDowell looked at him through the eyebrows; and the look was not precisely that of a beaten man. Taylor stepped back.

"You'll call me sir as long as you're workin' for me," said the chief slowly, "and what I'll get out of it is my business."

"Suits me," said Braithwaite.

Tonks said nothing. He picked up one hand drill and walked over to the shaft. In equal silence the chief engineer picked up the other. Simultaneously their drills bit into the forward and aft collars of the broken shaft section.

It was not a pleasant job. The night—and it was eleven o'clock before Taylor, at the fourth relief, sent the first hole through—seemed hotter even than the day had been; and to work on those collars—even on the forward one, which was not under the break of the shaft tunnel—the driller had to squat half crouched, half astride the thrust with its various projections, and watch that his knuckles did not strike any one of half a dozen skin shearing things.

This was easy to do while one was still moderately fresh; after ten minutes it became less easy; and at the end of half an hour a man's right hand, driving the drill, ran blood while every muscle in his back, arms and legs screamed for mercy. Starting at the second hole, half awake after an hour's sleep on the steel floor, Braithwaite groaned aloud as he got into position; and when, at the first turn of the drill, his knuckles struck the collar, he burst into curses which seemed not very far removed from tears.

McDowell looked up from the hole he had just completed.

"I'd save my breath," he said dourly, centered his bit in a new punch mark and resumed work.

It may be noted that he had not been spelled as had the men at the forward collar; he had not moved from his place; he had not stopped working; nor, save for a heavy climb up the ladder at three A.M, and a heavy return with coffee and sandwiches, did he cease drilling until he had done three holes on his side, and it was necessary (having placed temporary bolts through the two collars) to turn the engines over with the hand gear so that the three lower holes might be drilled.

After this latter exercise, to which he contributed about half the strength used, he fell on the steel floor and went to sleep—but only for about fifteen minutes. Captain Scanlan came down to see how work was progressing; and at the sound of his voice Mr. McDowell became broad awake.

"My God!" said the captain, surveying the engineers.

Mr. McDowell laughed as he ambled back to his place astride the shaft. Also, as if accidentally, as he passed Scanlan, he laid his right hand for a moment on the captain's white duck shoulder. It made a stain mingled of oil and blood.

"We'll be under way at five this afternoon, if ye like," said the chief engineer hoarsely. "Weather keepin' fine?"

"Looks like we might have some wind tomorrow."

It is doubtful whether McDowell, already drilling, heard this; or that, in the absent mindedness of semi-coma, he understood it if he did. As for the others—Tonks was asleep and Taylor and Braithwaite had long since ceased to be conscious of anything but the necessity of turning that drill. Their arms and legs no longer belonged to them; their knuckles, bashed against steel at nearly every revolution now, had mercifully ceased to hurt. They wrapped cotton waste around them

each time they took over anew, and it came off immediately, and they never knew the difference. The captain stared at them for a moment; found nothing to say and moved toward the ladder. McDowell beckoned him.

"It'll be a feather in your cap, bringin' the ship to New Orleans, will it no'?"

The captain nodded. He had opened his mouth to speak, when the chief continued.

"The company'll no' forget it?"

Scanlan looked doubtful.

"I suppose you're figuring on your bonus. You've got to remember—"

Mr. McDowell laughed—possibly for the tenth time in his life. It was a rather bitter laugh, but entitled to be counted.

"Aye. The bonus. Weel, now, run along an' get your charts ready. I'll be up an' tell ye when all's set. Tonks!"

The second engineer woke with a violent start.

"Get to bed," growled his senior. "I'll be needin' you to start up when this is finished."

It was finished at half past five, after forty-six hours of work. Mr. McDowell stood by while the engines, charily throttled, turned over the patched shaft for its first ten or fifteen revolutions. Then, leaving Tonks in charge, he went up to the bridge—a grotesque figure which staggered from side to side, and held on to a doorpost of the charthouse while informing Captain Scanlan of the facts.

"So now for New Orleans," said Mr. McDowell, his knees buckling under him. Taking into account additionally his glassiness of eye and the extraordinary thickness of his speech, any one would have sworn he had been drinking.

"Company winna forget this," he added; and waved an outrageous looking hand in Scanlan's face.

"Give you bigger ship," he added fragmentarily; and collapsed full length on the deck.

III

WELL, to be plain and in order with you, and to start this chapter whose events I have not been able to regard with the detachment becoming a narrator—he slept for eighteen hours; slept while his engines—one change in the beat of which would normally have awakened him—were speeded, slowed a little as the bolts showed strain; and finally, with prayers on the part of all three juniors, reversed. He slept while two tugs blew their sirens alongside; and he awoke only when the engines stopped altogether and the anchor went down with a roar.

Then, staggering to the porthole, he looked out with eyes that at first comprehended nothing; but finally focused on the spire of St. Thomas' Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mr. McDowell's heart seemed to stand still; his mouth grew dry; there was a roaring in his ears. Not that he had any objection to either spires or Methodist Episcopalianism; but St. Thomas' is not in New Orleans, but in Oak Street, Port St. James.

He stood, staring for a few minutes, his mouth open; then, slowly, he turned and went to the door. With heavy stride he traversed the alleyway, climbed the companion and knocked at the captain's door. Scanlan was in the office, talking to Johnston, the port captain.

They stared at McDowell.

"We're back in Port St. James," said the apparition without prologue.

Scanlan stood up.

"Yes. You see—"

"Ye promised ye'd carry on to New Orleans."

Scanlan's lips tightened.

"Yes—if it was possible, I meant."

"Ye said nothing about possibility. There's been nae storm."

"Look here. McDowell—"

"Aye?"

Scanlan felt the eyes of the port captain on him. He hesitated a moment, swallowing the conciliatory words he had intended, and burst forth.

"Who the hell's responsible for the safety of the ship? I didn't consider it advisable to carry on to New Orleans. Now, then. What have you got to say about it? Anything?"

"Ye promised—"

The port captain sighed wearily and crossed his knees.

"Look here," said Scanlan savagely, "I—"

"An' look here," said Mr. McDowell. His voice beat down the other's. "You saved my life, Mr. Scanlan. I'm no' a demonstrative man. I tried to do this for ye. To make ye wi' the company. To do it, I've thrown away a' the discipline I had below—aye, I could ha' torn those boys to ribbons in yon scrap, an' I didna because then they couldna ha' worked. I bribed them to do their duty—with what I canna pay now. Because you promised to go to New Orleans. Ye hav'na gone. You've come back to Port St. James. Ye've spat on the gift I tried to make—"

"Who's in command of this vessel?" asked the port captain lazily.

"I am, by the Lord!" shouted Scanlan. "And here's something else, McDowell. You're a damn fine engineer; I admit it, and I'll report it to the company; but you don't sail with me any more. I'm not goin' to have—"

"Na," said Mr. McDowell. "I was goin' anyway. Goodby."

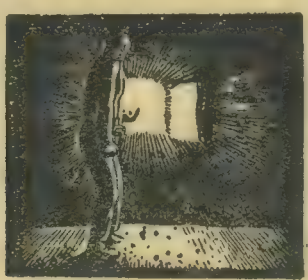
Whereupon he went heavily back to his cabin again and washed himself with a soap which is good to remove grease, but stings horribly when a man's knuckles are in ribbons. It stung so much that Mr. McDowell's eyes watered. But they were dry by the time he had got into his shore going clothes—the black suit which would not button and from which his arms and legs stuck out to such grotesque distances. And when, bag in hand, he went out on deck to hail one of the shore boats, his face was so much back in its original lines that neither Taylor nor the third mate, who were chatting at the rail near the accommodation ladder, cared to speak to him.

They merely spoke of him for a moment, as his broad back, rather bowed as he sat in the sternsheets, receded across the sunlit bay.

"Got to hand it to him, though," said Taylor, feeling generous. "Sixty years old, and stuck that grind better—as well as we did."

The third mate yawned.

"Yeah. And what a life. Sixty years old," said the third mate, thinking of a girl who lived on K Street and whom he had not expected to see again for two weeks, "sixty years old and never had an emotion! Never *felt* anything for anybody! What I mean—"



The COAST *of* BROKEN MEN

By LAWRENCE G. GREEN

ACCRA BEACH is a sight for all lovers of tropical romance and African adventure. Working there, month after month, under the burning sun, in the hot monsoon wind, is a different matter.

In West Africa, white men and women can live only within the armor of their daily quinine. Every one wears the strained look that is the price of life in the tropics. I talked to an English public schoolboy, checking cargo alongside the surf boats on Accra Beach. There was no pink bloom left on his cheeks. His face was sallow, lined with illness and worry.

"People in England think that we live easily on the Coast, that the doctors have wiped out all disease," he told me wearily, pushing back his heavy helmet. "That idea hurts us out here—it's all wrong. We are certainly not overpaid, and our home leave every few years is not a luxury—it is death to stay much longer. Some men don't stick it for a year."

The newcomer to a trading firm anywhere in West Africa usually finds himself at work as a beachmaster. He goes down to the beach at six o'clock in the morning and his boy follows him soon afterward with breakfast. Cold eggs and bacon in a very hot shed. His main duty is to check cargo as the surf boats come in from the freighters in the roadstead. He must have a quick eye for breakages and shortages—for the ingenuity of the black thief is more Oriental than African.

Dozens of natives arrive during the day with palm kernels. Some of them carry petrol tins and calabashes of palm oil. The beachmaster must see everything weighed out and measured. He must supervise the laborers bagging kernels and pouring oil into casks. Always he must have an eye in the back of his head for the incoming surf boats.

At noon, if he is fortunate, he may stagger up to the mess for lunch. With equally good luck he may be able to rest for an hour.

Work goes on unceasingly until six in the evening—often later. The beachmaster's head aches, his eyes are tired and dazzled in the blinding sun glare. No tennis at sundown for him. Just time for a hasty shower before dinner. Sunday is often the busiest day of the week.

In return for this unpleasant life, the young man learning to be a West Coast trader may expect a salary of £25 a month, possibly a little more. At the end of two years he will receive four months' leave on half pay. If he is invalided home before his contract has expired, he is almost certain to lose his job. If he works hard for two years he may be lucky enough to secure an eighteen months' contract for the next spell of duty, and a higher salary. A well educated young man, ambitious and with the essential physical endurance, will be making more at the end of five years than he would receive after twenty years in England. Or he may still be selling cotton print to hot and odorous black humanity behind the counter in the store.

A career in West Africa is a gamble. You back your character and your body against the most insidious climate in the world. The agents and supervisors, with their £1000 a year salaries and their trips to England every nine or twelve months, are the men who have won. The losers, some of them, are dragging themselves along slum pavements in English towns. I doubt whether any land in the world breaks men more surely than "the Coast."

By HAROLD LAMB

Author of "Tamerlane" and "Genghis Khan"

FOREWORD

IN THE month of June, 1187, a storm was gathering on the front line of Christianity. This front line held a few points to the east of the Dead Sea, and ran north along the river Jordan to the mountains that stretched as far as Antioch. The area behind the front line was known as Palestine, and was called the Holy Land by the Crusaders who held it.

These Crusaders had come out of Europe in the tidal wave of the first Crusade ninety-odd years before. They had captured Jerusalem and all the Holy Land—they spoke of it sometimes as *Outremer*, Beyond the Sea—and had settled down at this new frontier in the East to build their castles and defend Jerusalem with their swords.

The venture had been something new for Christianity—a voyage long before the age of ocean voyages; and a colony, four centuries before the age of colonization. The Crusaders quartered themselves with grim determination around the tomb of their Lord, while the clans of Islam made counter-attacks with equal determination to retake Jerusalem.

The first of a series of true narratives of the Iron Men of the Crusades

Saladin's HOLY WAR

During the ninety-odd years from the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099, to the storm now gathering in 1187, the position of the front line had shifted continually—the Crusaders losing ground in the north, on the left of their front before Aleppo, while they held fast in the Jerusalem region, overlooking the abyss of the Dead Sea, and the gorge of the Jordan. Man for man the armored knights—who had adapted themselves to the climate and warfare of the East—were rather more than a match for the swift moving horsemen of the Moslem armies. The massive castles built by the knights—the Arabs spoke of them as the Watchers—on the summits of the hills strengthened the frontier.

Weight of numbers, however, was against the Crusaders holding the frontier, the veteran feudal lords of *Outremer*, and the equally experienced Templars and Hospitallers. Their army of Jerusalem numbered no more than twenty thousand, horse and foot, at this time. Reenforcements from Europe could only reach them after a long, slow voyage in small vessels crawling from island to island across the Great Sea to the coast of Palestine. Urgent messages had been sent by the Crusaders holding Palestine to the courts of Christendom, for aid; but aid was still months away.

So the small army of Jerusalem had to meet the storm as best it could without support.

On the other hand the Moslem host had been growing in numbers and spirit. It had added the Turkoman clans of the north to the Bedawan contingents and the trained Mamluk cavalry of Damascus and Cairo; these elements had been welded together by the fierce eagerness of the *jihad*—the holy war now to be launched in earnest against the infidel invaders.

And the host of Islam was led by a man as determined as he was able—Saladin, the Victory Bringer, Sultan of Islam . . .

* * *

IT IS CLEAR that Saladin planned the *jihad* from the first. He knew that only by a holy war could he unite the restive factions of the Near East. Left to their own devices the Turkomans would make war on the Kurds, and the Bedawans of the barren lands would pillage both, and all three of them would raid the Arab lords of Damascus, while the Mamluks and Sudanis of the Cairo barracks would revolt. But they would all follow the standards of Islam to war against unbelievers. The Turkish Ata Begs of the north would rise with the *shaikhs* of the desert clans and the amirs of Egypt—given the sultan to lead them.

Only a saint of Islam or a new prophet could win utter obedience from these warriors who were zealous in prayer, but would rather loot than pray. They looked upon Saladin with awe, for he was devout beyond any doubt, and he had the secret of winning victories.

Already he had pieced together a new empire, upon the cornerstone of Egypt. He had added Damascus to Cairo, and Aleppo to Damascus, and had joined thereto the eastern desert and the Arabian plain with its holy cities of Mecca and Medina. So his growing empire was like a crescent, curving about Palestine.

The lands of the Crusaders projected within the crescent, almost within sight of Damascus. Previous attempts to drive the Crusaders out had been beaten off by the stubborn valor of the knights and men-at-arms—aided by disunity among the Moslems.

Saladin vowed that he would redeem Jerusalem. To the Moslems no less than to the Crusaders Jerusalem was sacred. They called it Al Kuds—The Holy. Once Muhammad had commanded them to pray facing Jerusalem, and they believed that he had ascended after his death from the Rock of Jerusalem, upon his steed Burak; and upon the Judgment Day the souls of the faithful would gather about this Rock. Now the Crusaders had built an altar upon the Rock, and had raised a cross over the roof of the Al Aksa mosque. Saladin had set his heart upon redeeming Jerusalem. Against the Crusaders he had launched a counter-crusade.

Strangely—for he was a Kurd by birth—the new sultan did not love fighting for its own sake. Slight in body, and weakened by intermittent fever, he had not the physical vitality that makes a sport of war. Years ago he had played polo, and indulged a taste for fine horses and rare wine and books. Now he had put aside pastimes for the duties of a ruler.

For himself, he was not ambitious. At his command the treasury was emptied to bestow gifts on the throng of followers who begged of him. He cherished fine horses, and gave them away to his officers.

And the multitudes of Islam—who

love a generous conqueror—were more than ready to follow him. They journeyed in from the far lands for a sight of the stately Kurd with the meditative eyes. In his black *khalat* embroidered with gold thread, and his *tarboush* wound with a white turban cloth, the sultan with his long Arab scimitar and his dark beard seemed to them the very figure of a conqueror.

They did not know, perhaps, that Saladin* lacked the physical strength to use the scimitar in battle, or that anxiety had woven gray threads in his black beard, or that patience and steel-like determination had gained the victories for him. So long as he prevailed, they did not care.

He had able helpers, when he rode forth on the *jihad*—El Fadil the *kadi*, to administer the kingdom behind him, and Taki ad-Din, his nephew, to lead the cavalry in advance. The amirs of his host gave solemn advice at his councils. But upon Saladin himself lay the full weight of responsibility. He had called forth the *jihad* and he must show the way to victory.

"He spoke then of nothing else," his chronicler said. "He thought of nothing but war and engines, and occupied himself with his soldiers. He was content with the shade of a single tent."

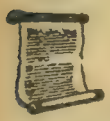
His enthusiasm animated the new levies who marched with him down the eastern bank of the Jordan along the Hadj, the Pilgrim Road that ended only at Mecca. Ragged Turkomans, mailed Mamluks under their yellow banners, black Sudanis in scarlet *kaftans*—Arabs, Turks and Kurds—they moved in flashing masses through the blue haze of the desert upland, beyond the bare line of Moab's height and far beyond sight of the watchers in Jerusalem's towers. Only the brown cloaked shepherds and the dusty pilgrim caravans saw their passing, when Taki ad-Din came down from the north.

Saladin and his host of Islam descended

*Salah ad-Din. The Crusaders and after them the historians of Europe have written his name Saladin for centuries.

the eastern height, and forded the Jordan below Galilee. They swarmed up the western slope of the gorge, and left the frontier behind them.

Ahead of them, midway between them and the sea, the host of the Crusaders lay encamped . . .



IT WAS the *ban* and the *arriere ban*—the king's summons for lord and vassal, and peasantry, for the castle guards and crews of the ships. They plodded along the roads toward Saffuriya. Gallants of Tripoli, adventurers from the sea, the spears of Tyre and the close drawn ranks of the mailed Templars—young esquires from the halls, with flowers in their mantles and the memory of farewell smiles tugging at their thoughts—grim knights from the Watchers, and brown, pagan Turcoples who wasted no thought on the causes of war. Toward the meeting place they moved, through the white dust of the dry season.

In the shade of the road shrines they sat by the wells; they emerged from dry *wadis* and filed out of cattle paths. They slept in the churches or marched under the cool stars. Knights of Jerusalem, escorting the gold standard of the Cross, rode by the black garbed Hospitallers, climbing the slow road around Carmel's height where the monks prayed, up to the highlands, to Saffuriya where the wells were the last wells. Beyond Saffuriya the bare plain rose to the hills of Galilee, without river or well.

At the camp of Saffuriya the great lords waited in their pavilions. Already they were taking counsel together as to what should be done. It was their misfortune that in this crisis the king himself, Guy of Lusignan, should be a weakling, incapable of holding the command that Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin the First had held.

Knowing that Guy would be little better than a figurehead, the barons of Jerusalem took matters into their own hands. The ablest of them was Raymond, Prince of Galilee. For five years he had been a captive of the Moslems, and he knew Saladin's worth. Raymond was young; he had the courage to strike, and the wisdom to avoid a trap. Hard riding and hard living had shortened his years and temper; moreover in these hot nights he had emptied too many goblets of wine. His wife and his children were penned in his castle of Tiberias down in the abyss of Galilee—separated from him now by the Moslem advance, and wine could not drown his anxiety.

The dour soldier-monks, the Templars, disliked Raymond. The master of the Temple, de Riddeford, suspected the young prince of Galilee because Raymond had been intimate with Saladin. And de Riddeford would not see that Raymond's presence at the camp proved his loyalty to the weak king and the army.

Then, too, Raymond had waged more than one feud with Reginald of Kerak. Men called him the wolf of Kerak, and the Moslems knew him as *Arnat*. Faithless in most things, the lord of Kerak had unquestioned courage. Fifteen years he had spent in a Moslem prison, and he had emerged from it to raid into the desert within sight of Mecca. Saladin had vowed to slay him with his own hand.

Raymond found no sleep in the hot nights, while Reginald of Kerak chafed at the waiting. They had made up their quarrel at the meeting place, for this was the rallying of the mailed host in time of need, and personal quarrels must be put aside. Humphrey of Toron was here, and the brave Balian d'Ibelin, with Amalric the Constable.

The days passed and they waited, while scouts brought in word of the Moslems. Saladin had led his last contingents across the Jordan, and was camped along the heights above Galilee, facing them, but fifteen miles away. Saladin had a great host with him, twenty-five thousand horsemen, and they were waiting also. Their pickets were within sight. Saladin could not move toward Jerusalem while the Christians watched at Saffuriya. He could not get past them, to the coast. So the two armies rested, full in their

strength, alert and wary, while the days of June ended.

Then Saladin sent a division back, into the depths of the lake shore, to attack Tiberias. The outer town was stormed in a day, and Raymond's wife with her scanty garrison driven into the castle.

That night the lords of the Christian host gathered in the pavilion of the king, to decide what they must do. Gravely spoke de Riddeford, master of the Temple—

"We can not, in honor, hold back while the castle is taken, within our reach."

Reginald of Kerak added his voice to the master's. They looked then to the king.

"I have no will to press the war," he said, with hesitation.

Raymond spoke then:

"Can you not see what lies before you? O my comrades, not little is the peril in which we stand from this man Saladin."

And he explained that they would find no water in the advance against the Moslems. It would be better to let Tiberias fall, let his wife be taken, than to risk an advance. If they held their ground, the Moslems must withdraw or lose the advantage of position. Many agreed with him, while the younger knights and the reckless lord of Kerak urged an attack, reminding the council that Raymond had been guilty of treating with Saladin. In the end the council decided not to advance beyond Saffuriya.

But that night de Riddeford and Reginald of Kerak went to the king's tent, and persuaded the irresolute Guy to order an advance at dawn.

So the banners of the host moved out over the plain, and the chivalry of Beyond the Sea went into battle for a point of honor.*

*The Moslem chronicles relate that Saladin's amirs advised him at this time not to risk a battle but to withdraw and lay waste the lands of the Christian lords until they scattered. Saladin answered: "And when will such a gathering be gathered together again in one place before us? Nay, be ready to lead your men. God will do what He wills."

THE CHRISTIAN leaders marched at dawn, the second day of July, hoping to reach the Moslem line at noon, and break through before darkness. They knew the Moslems held the brow of the great descent toward Galilee, six hundred feet below the level of the sea. If the Moslems could be broken and thrown back, they would be hurled down the descent upon the walls of Tiberias. As for the numbers of the Moslems, the old wolf of Kerak laughed.

"The more the wood the greater will be the fire . . ."

The sun, however, held a fire of its own, and the marching columns lagged. They were twenty thousand men of all arms, and for the greater part experienced in war. They were ready for battle. But most of them marched afoot, in mail and carrying water. Under their feet the gray rock ledges burned with the intolerable heat of the sky overhead, and red dust choked their throats. Their feet climbed long slopes, and stumbled down into brush filled gullies. Although the knights rode back to urge them on, they lagged.

When the sun went down they were still far from the Moslem lines. The leaders called a halt and the men camped and drank thirstily, and slept while mounted patrols watched. But Raymond could not sleep, knowing that they had ventured too far, and yet not far enough. They could not turn back, in the face of the Moslem horsemen; they had left the springs of Saffuriya, and on the morrow they must reach the water of Galilee.

"Lord, Lord!" he cried. "Already is the battle lost, and we are dead men."

Before the first light the olifants sounded, the horses were saddled, while the spearmen and archers looked to their weapons and sought their ranks. As they pushed forward the sun blazed red in their eyes, and when the heat struck into their limbs they drank the last of their water, throwing away the empty skins.

Ahead of them drums throbbed and cymbals clashed. They saw dark masses

of horsemen moving out to the flanks, under the green banners of Islam. The dry earth burned their feet, and the chaff of trampled wheat rose about them in the air that quivered with heat. Sweat dried on their skin, and the iron weighed upon their shoulders.

The wild Arab clans surged through the veil of dust, and the first arrows flashed while a roar of voices answered the drums:

"*Yahla 'l Islam! Yahla 'l Islam!*"

The light of the sun glowed on the gold casing of the Cross, raised above their heads.

The sun set at last and dusk crept across the glare of the sky. No wind breathed upon the dry breast of the earth, with its trodden wheat and dusty, brittle tamarisks.

On knolls and rock ridges the Crusaders sat or lay, without light or water or food. A murmur went from mass to mass of them, where hoarse voices whispered and cracked lips prayed, and the wounded moaned in vain for water. The saddles were not taken from the sweat stained horses. Broken spears lay upon the ground, and knights sat silent among peasants.

They had fought through the day, knights and archers and spearmen. They had moved forward a little. But they had not broken the line of the Moslem horsemen. So they waited in the hours of darkness by their dead, wracked by thirst and weariness, and ebbing hope. The last of their water was gone, and their leaders could do nothing more for them.

"In that place," the Moslem chronicler says, "the Angels of Death kept watch that night."

Lights flickered and tossed around the mass of Crusaders, where the cavalry patrols hemmed them in. For Saladin had extended his line to close them in. They heard the chanting voices of the Koran readers, and the eager shouts of men who had water to drink and hope for the morrow.

"*Allahu akbar—allah 'l allahu!*"

With the dawn the Christians took up their weapons and came on again.

"They advanced," the Moslem chronicler adds, "as if driven toward certain death."

They did not move with raised lances and firm ranks, the men on foot supporting the horsemen. Instead, they trampled through the dust clouds pushing silently toward the cool gorge of Galilee, clearly to be seen but beyond their reach. For the fever of thirst raged in them, and on that fourth day of July they fought like the specters of men, toward the hope of water and life. The struggle raged in the village of Loubiya under the rocky hillocks known as the Horns of Hattin.

In this struggle the foot became separated from the horse. The knights, deprived of support, made vain charges into the solid array of the Moslems, already tasting victory. Horses fell under the deadly arrows, or sank exhausted, and the chivalry of Jerusalem was forced to stand to defend itself, drawing more and more into a dense circle, cut off from the men-at-arms who scattered in groups on rising ground.

Only Raymond of Galilee was able to lead some scores of riders in a desperate charge that broke through the Moslem lines. He rode on a spent horse back to the coast.

By noon of this last day of the battle, the remaining lords had gathered about the king and Reginald of Kerak on the knolls of Hattin, where the gold Cross gleamed. Surrounded and ceaselessly beset by Saladin's cavalry, they held their ground, wielding sword and battle ax, until the brush around them was set on fire by the Moslems.

When the smoke thinned and drifted away they threw down their weapons, and sat down where they had stood, without strength to do more. Their bleared eyes saw the Cross lowered by a Moslem hand.

"Of all who had come hither, only the captives were left alive."

So the chivalry of Jerusalem came to its end, and the battle of Hattin ceased.

NOTHING remained of the army of the Crusaders*. It had been the *ban* and the *arrière ban*. All the able bodied strength of their kingdom had marched out of Saffuriya, and had ceased to be, there in the red fields above Galilee. Nothing was left, except the dark bodies lying in clumps like fallen stacks of wheat, while the Moslems stripped them of stained and dusty weapons. Except the captives, in torn shirts and bloodied leather jerkins, staring voicelessly at the Moslem horsemen.

Perhaps a few scores of mounted Turcoples had found a way from the battlefield, or some wearied stragglers still hid in the gullies. Raymond reached his castle in Tripoli and died there two weeks later of exhaustion and a broken heart.

That evening the last cavalry of Taki ad-Din came in from the pursuit, and dismounted in a tumult of rejoicing, where the Turkish swordsmen were cutting the heads from the Templars who had survived the battle—some two hundred of them. It was the rule of the Temple that no member of the order might ransom himself. And the Moslems treated them without mercy, except for the master, de Riddeford. The grim warrior-monks knelt under the sword strokes without protest or prayer for mercy. The law of of Islam required that before an unbeliever was put to death, he should be offered the chance of acknowledging the faith of Muhammad, and if he accepted he should be spared. But the Templars made no reply to the contemptuous question, and the swords fell.

When the last wearer of the red cross lay on the ground, Saladin rode to his camp—where his servants were setting up the great pavilions joyfully. He stopped where the *kadis* were gathered about the gold casing of the Cross, shining in the torchlight. This was the emblem of the Crusaders. It had gone before them in battle from Ascalon to Hattin.

For nearly ninety years they had prevailed. Nur ad-Din had dreamed of their overthrow, but in two days Saladin had put an end to them. What conqueror of Asia had tasted such a victory? Not Xerxes and not Mahmoud. The Kurd in Saladin exulted in the triumph of his clans; the scholar in him pondered the meaning of the triumph; and the devout spirit of the conqueror felt in this sudden, bewildering achievement an omen of greater things. Unless God had willed it, the fate of Hattin would not have befallen his enemies.

Before his tent Saladin listened to the exultation of his officers. Courteous Adil, his brother, came forward to congratulate him; impetuous Taki ad-Din chanted a song about the battle, and the Arab chieftains beat their hands in response. Indeed and indeed, Saladin was the King, the Victory Bringer.

What followed is related by the chronicler.

"Saladin held an audience in the vestibule of his tent—for it was not yet put up. The warriors came to claim his favor, presenting to him the prisoners they had made, and the chieftains they had identified.

"The tent was finally in order, and the sultan seated himself there happily. He bade them bring in the king and his brother*, and the prince *Arnat*. Then he gave a sherbet of chilled rose water to the king, who was overcome by thirst. He only drank a part, and offered the goblet to the prince *Arnat*. The sultan said at once to the interpreter, 'Remind the king that it is not I but he who gives drink to this man.'

"For the sultan had adopted the praiseworthy and generous custom of the nomads who granted life to a prisoner if he ate or drank of that which belonged to them.

"Then he gave order to lead the three to a place prepared for their reception,

*Historians, reading the pages of William of Tyre, have explained the disaster by saying that these men of the army of Jerusalem were degenerate or weaklings compared to the earlier Crusaders, and so were defeated where the others gained victories. That is not so. These man did not lack courage, or experience. They were badly led, and they were opposed by a united army of Islam superior in numbers, and ably commanded by Saladin.

*Guy and Amalric of Lusignan, who were the king and the constable of Jerusalem. *Arnat* was Reginald of Kerak.

and when they had eaten, he asked for them to be brought in again. Only some servants were then with him. The king he made to sit in the vestibule; he required the prince of Kerak to come in, and after reminding him again of the words he had spoken, he said, 'I am he who will serve Muhammad against thee!'

"He then inquired if the prince would embrace Islam, and on the man's refusal, he drew his sword and struck him a blow which severed the arm from the shoulder. At this the servitors sprang upon the captive, and God sent his soul to hell.

"They drew his body out, and cast it into the tent entrance. The king, seeing in what fashion his comrade had been treated, believed that he would be the second victim, and he shook in all his limbs. But the sultan had him brought in and calmed his fears.

" 'Kings,' he said, 'have not the habit of slaying kings, but that man yonder has passed all limits.' "

THE citadel of Tiberias was surrendered by Raymond's wife the next day, and Saladin placed his prisoners under guard in that town. And he made ready to take full advantage of the extraordinary situation.

His army was almost intact, the men eager to be led on. Elsewhere the Christian strongholds were just beginning to hear the terrible tidings of Hattin. More than that, the great citadels were now held only by skeleton garrisons. Their feudal lords—almost without exception—had been slain or taken at Hattin. Saladin wasted not a day in deliberation. He brought his army down to the coast, thus cutting the lands of the Crusaders in twain—separating north from south.

He struck first at the strongest of the coast ports, Acre. With what siege engines he had been able to carry on camel and mule back, he prepared to attack the walls; but Acre, with only a handful of soldiers, opened its gates and the sultan was well pleased to grant it generous terms.

Then he divided his host—since no army could possibly be mustered to threaten the Moslems—and sent the divisions headlong over the country, under Al Adil, Taki ad-Din and the other amirs. He himself cleared the mid-region between Acre and Galilee, taking possession of Haifa, Saffuriya, Nazareth, and Caesarea to the south. Sidon yielded to a passing summons, and Beirut—a walled city without a fortress—surrendered after an eight day siege.

Swiftly Saladin detached garrisons to hold the captured places. The people of the towns he let go where they willed. Without their fortresses, the bulk of the Christians were helpless under the swords of his horsemen. His soldiers snatched up all provisions and weapons and precious goods, but the sultan would not delay for any seeking of spoil. Jerusalem was his goal, and thither he went on the heels of Malik Adil, who had stormed Jaffa.

By the last of July Saladin was camped in the sands before the great wall of Ascalon, which had refused to surrender. Ascalon, sheltered behind its twelve-foot curtains and square towers, was the main port of the south, as Acre had been of the center of the Holy Land. From it ran the caravan route to Egypt. The Moslems called it the Bride of Syria, and Saladin would not leave it unconquered. While he prepared to besiege it he sent for Guy of Lusignan, who had been its lord.

When the captive king appeared, the sultan offered to release him if he secured the surrender of the city. Guy was led under the wall to talk to the garrison, but could not prevail upon the defenders to open their gates. So the Moslems drew the siege lines tighter, and sent detachments to subdue the country between there and Jerusalem.

Here the Christians still lingered in the little hill towns, by their shrines and churches—all of them who had not taken refuge in Jerusalem. Down by the sea Gaza and Darum yielded to the sultan's summons. Defense was hopeless, and Ramlah gave up its keys, while the Mos-

lem banners were carried into the church over the tomb of St. George.

Within the foothills, the strong castle of Ibelin surrendered after bargaining for the release of its beloved lord, young Balian. Almost within sight of Jerusalem, the monks yielded Bait-Laim, which the Crusaders called Bethlehem. And, isolated, without hope of aid, Ascalon asked for terms on the fourth of September.

In two months Saladin had swept through the whole of the Holy Land that had taken the Crusaders so many generations of effort and bloodshed to subdue. True, in the east several of the giants of the frontier still remained intact on their heights. But the Moslems held all the country behind them and, cut off from the sea, their fate was only a matter of time. They were summits that had escaped the sweep of the flood, and the men isolated within them could not venture out.

And Saladin's thoughts were bent on Jerusalem, where lay the Al Aksa, the third sacred place of Islam, and the gray rock from which Muhammad had ascended. Jerusalem would be the fruit of his conquest—the true reward of the almost unbelievable good fortune that had befallen him.

On the twentieth of September his army camped on the western height opposite the gate of David.

A FEW days before Balian d'Ibelin had reined his horse through the same gate. The young baron found himself the only noble within the city of all those who had gone forth to Hattin. The queen, Sybil, waited there in the palace, with the patriarch Heraclius and the abbots of lost churches, with the refugees from a dozen towns. But no knight skilled in arms until Balian came.

Anxious women thronged the narrow streets. Cattle crowded the fields by the butchery. Mules and led horses filled the chambers under the Templars' quarters, where the chargers had been. Boys, gray priests and Syrian Christians—long robed merchants, haggard pilgrims, and voiceless widows waited in the courtyard of the Sepulchre, while prayers were uttered ceaselessly. Only a scattering of armed men gathered on the tower summits, or walked moodily through the alleys.

And they all besought Balian to take command of the defense. They had not seen the red fields of Hattin. Their thoughts could not grasp the reality—that the armed host did not exist any more. In some way a miracle would aid them, and Jerusalem would not be taken from them. Balian d'Ibelin must show them how to defend the city!

He told them that he was no more than a prisoner released on his oath never to bear arms against the sultan. He showed them that he wore no sword. They pressed around him, and would not leave him, and in the end he yielded to them. A knight, raised to arms, could not stand apart while common people fought.

All this he wrote in a despairing letter to Saladin, asking in the same moment that the sultan would seek out and safeguard his wife and children. In time the answer came, that Saladin understood and would protect his family.

Meanwhile Balian did what he could. He assembled the few score men trained in arms. He knighted, without ceremony, some fifty youthful esquires and sergeants. With the money of the churches he bought pikes and crossbows and shields for the hundreds of peasants and pilgrims who were able to handle them. He knew well enough that no miracle would hold the city by aid of such men, but he had cast in his lot with them, and he did what he could. At least Jerusalem would not fall without a blow struck.

Meanwhile Saladin and his amirs had studied the western wall, and found it too strong to be assailed. As the first Crusaders had done, eighty and eight years before, he moved his camp to the high ground opposite the northeast angle of the city. Here the siege engines were set up, and a barricade raised along the ditch to protect the miners who set to work to dig under the foundations of the wall.

The unskilled garrison had no proper

engines to break down the barricade, and their counter-mines fell in. They manned the summit of the wall and plied their bows, but the veteran Mamluks and Turks made no attempt at first to storm the gray stone rampart. Instead, the miners enlarged their tunnels, propping up the foundation of the city wall as they dug beneath it—until the props were burned and a broad section of the wall cracked and fell in.

For this moment the Moslem swordsmen had waited, and while the drums roared they swarmed up into the breach, to be met by arrows and sling-stones and javelins.

"I will take Jerusalem as the Christians took it," Saladin had said, "sword in hand."

The Moslems gained the breach and held it, fortifying it for their next effort. And that night a kind of miracle happened. While the priests and women marched in procession through the streets chanting the *Miserere*, the armed men led by the knights, surged out, with the battle cry of the Cross—

"God wills it!"

They drove the besiegers from the breach, and when the next day had passed with its din of weapons and outcry of the wounded and the maddened men, they still held fast in the breach, against the stones and shafts from the Moslem engines.

And they sent out envoys to Saladin, saying in the exultation of the hour that the men of Jerusalem had pledged themselves not to survive the loss of the city. They would slaughter the horses and cattle, and pile the furniture in the churches. They would set torches to the wood and burn the churches, with their altars and vestments and relics. Women and children would be put to the sword, and then the men, priests and warriors would sally out to find death in their turn.

While Saladin pondered their words, the patriarch Heraclius sought Balian d'Ibelin within the city.

"It is not well to destroy ourselves thus," he said. "For every man of us fifty women and children would be lost. Nay, it is better to yield the city and betake ourselves to Christian soil."

Balian listened and talked with the leaders of the men. The next day he went out under truce to confer with Saladin. What the knight and the sultan said is not known. Both were men of decision and they knew the plight of Jerusalem. The enlightened Moslem had no wish to lay the city in ruins, and he agreed to allow all the inhabitants to depart with arms and all possessions, except money, that they could take with them. But they must ransom themselves, paying ten pieces of gold for every man, five for a woman, and one for a child. He agreed to conduct them to the coast ports.

And Balian, who could not have hoped for such leniency, accepted the terms.

The next days saw a strange sight. All the gates remained closed except the Gate of David. From this a ceaseless cavalcade passed out. Women, in traveling cloaks, laden with bundles, rode forth with their children, while servants dragged cattle and herded sheep beside them. Sallow Armenians rode out on donkeys, followed by their women. Barefoot monks came out, with lowered heads, marching after their superiors. Behind them the bells of the Sepulchre were tolling.

The men of Jerusalem came forth—seneschal and hermit, lord and beggar and peasant. Among her ladies, veiled before the insolent eyes of the Moslem warriors, Sybil the queen appeared, with her sister and the widows of Hattin. Some went down the road silent in their pride, but others sought the sultan in a throng and fell on their knees to beseech that their husbands, the captives of Hattin, be released. A strange sight—the noblewomen of *Outremer* kneeling before a sultan of Islam. They did not beg in vain, for Saladin granted their plea.

All of them paid their ransom coins to the watchful officers, and Saladin, when the money was brought to him, gave it out to the Moslem soldiers.

The black robes of the sad priests filed past him, and the gray habits of the Au-

gustinians. The patriarch Heraclius went out, with his private treasure hidden in the sacks upon his beasts. He carried out gold, although thousands of the poor remained weeping in the city. It was Saladin who released them—and who forbade his men to lay hand on the property of the patriarch—by announcing that those who had no money might pass out by the postern of St. Lazarus.

So the last of the exodus began, and the people of the alleys, with their rags and their sick and clinging children, passed across the stones of the Sepulchre courtyard, looking up at the silent bell tower and the arched gateways with their familiar stone figures. They looked back at the dome of the Temple of the Lord, and as they left the gate, their hands touched helplessly the gray stones.

Upon the road they stood without knowing what else to do, until detachments of Moslem cavalry formed them into parties and set out with them toward the coast. No miracle had saved the city, but a strange thing had happened. For the Moslems had taken possession of it without blood being shed. And this had been brought about by Saladin's mercy.

On the hill beyond the gate the people of Jerusalem saw dark figures climb to the dome of the Sepulchre and wrench from it the great gilt cross, casting it down to the ground. A shout rose and swelled as surf beats against the rocks of a shore—

"*Allahu-akbar—allah 'l allahu!*"

IT SEEMED to the world of Islam a portent and a sign from the Lord. Hattin had ceased upon a Friday, and Jerusalem had fallen upon a Friday while the true believers prayed. Couriers rode to the distant lands, crying out their message—

"The praise to God, who hath overturned the pride of the Nazarenes by the sword of the King, the Victory Bringer!"

Already the learned men of Damascus and Cairo were assembling, with the *kadis* and the readers of the Law, to make the first pilgrimage to Al Kuds—The Holy. For that was their name for Jerusalem.

The men of letters wrote a paean of victory, and people made a song of the downfall of the Christians.

Their city!
Fallen is their city, into the hands of the true friends of the Lord.
Fearful is their spirit, beholding before them only the Sword and the fire of Purgatory!

On the Temple enclosure thousands of hands were laboring at the Al Aksa mosque that had been for so long the palace of the Templars. The walled-up prayer niches were opened again, and the altar torn from the chapel. Mosaics upon the walls were whitewashed, and the heads smashed from marble images—since Muhammad had forbidden the worship of images. The stones were washed, and sprinkled with rose water. And in the corner toward Mecca a slender pulpit of carved wood was placed.

This had been fashioned by order of Nur ad-Din, to be kept until it could be placed in the Holy City. And Saladin, remembering it, had sent for it from Aleppo. Around it clean prayer carpets were spread, and men hastened to wash their feet and kneel in this sanctuary redeemed from the infidels, while the caller-to-prayer ascended the bell tower from which the bells had been thrown.

Swarthy faces were lifted reverently, when the chant of the muezzin sounded over the roofs. Mailed figures gathered, shoulder to shoulder, and brother smiled at brother.

O Dawn that has cast its shadows upon the unbelievers,
Shrouding them in eternal night!

O Dawn that has brought new life to Islam,
Shedding the radiance of everlasting day!

A Story of the Firefighters

The GETAWAY JOB

By KARL W. DETZER

STUBBORN old Tom Maddox, chief of department, was losing his grip, and Captain Paddy McCann would have been the last to deny it. When a man has served faithfully more than forty years, when he has battled fire unceasingly, has taken his dose of smoke in every block in the city, one expects him to slow down.

Tom Maddox came into the business in the robustious days of the volunteers, when the alarm system consisted of a man and a telescope on the tower of the city hall, and every fire was followed by bloodshed, beer and oratory. Down through the smoky years he had marched with his duty. He had run with hand drawn reels of hard rubber hose, had heard the complaint of skeptics when horses and steam replaced good old trustworthy Barton manpower pumps. He had seen horses go and gasoline come in, and that would not end it, he knew well enough. There would be other changes; and they came, indeed, while he still served as chief . . . The introduction of smother-tank wagons full of frothy lather, searchlight companies, concrete breaking crews, department ambulances, all the new apparatus and the specialists who manned it, down to the coffee carts.

Smoke, flame, gas, immense labors, heat and biting cold, howling midnights, endless battle—these leave their mark upon any man, no matter how staunch, upon his heart and his soul, upon his back and lungs. Maddox was slipping now. He was losing his grip. His eyes were not so keen as they used to be; sometimes his ears failed to pick up the joker alarm code; his voice had a crack in it that he could not conceal. His temper became more brittle. There was less reason in him. But he still could climb, and it was his own contention that no man who could shin an eighty-five foot aerial in less

than four minutes, as he could, and did frequently to the amazement of the whole department, was ready to turn in his badge.

Captain Paddy McCann, Ladder Truck 19, thoughtfully watched the decline of the old chief. If Big Tom only would ask for his pension, pull off his boots and turn in his helmet, go fishing, contentedly, and let a younger head wear the great white hat! There were half a dozen good men up at the top of the heap, and the golden bugles of department command would fit snugly on any of them. They were stout firemen, every one, assistant chiefs and deputy and divisional marshals, fisty battlers in their prime, with many a fighting year ahead of them.

Paddy McCann lost no love on old Tom. It was a long story, clouded by recriminations, dating back to the years when old Tom was young Captain Tom of Engine 3, and Paddy McCann was a gangling recruit on the same outfit, getting his first taste of smoke. Up through the ranks they had lugged their quarrel, which may or may not have been a just one, so that at length they forgot what had started it and remembered only its bitterness.

But they were square shooters both; each admitted that willingly of the other. So even when old Tom began to fumble his job, began to be absent from four-baggers after midnight, began to let big fires get away from him, began to find fault where there was no fault, there was little to say. McCann only wondered, reasonably, why the old man had not retired, why he persisted in loading the department, making it topheavy with inefficiency.

McCann was known, rightfully, as a plugger; a steady, thoughtful officer, dependable as the Gamewell alarm system. His record was clean but not spectacular. In all his twenty years of service he had been conspicuous chiefly for attending his duty quietly and minding his own affairs. Had he been of a quarrelsome nature this affair with old Tom would not have excited notice; only the fact that except for it he never picked a fight or harbored a grudge made it conspicuous.

So around the alarm stands on stormy nights, veterans of the service talked sometimes of the old feud, and wondered when, if ever, it would flare up. But they agreed that Paddy McCann was no man to start anything.

"He's a fireman, he is," they would admit. "He ain't a politician, saints be praised. He'll allow no private fight of his own to start anything agin the old man."

And politics so far had let the department alone. Every man in the business who was worthy of his badge rejoiced in that fact. Administrations came and went, good mayors and bad mayors, aldermen who were clean and aldermen who could be bought; still politics steered shy of the fire department.

Old Tom was the reason. No one dared cross him. No one ever thought of corruption under his unrelenting eyes. It would take a tenacious grafter to get by Tom Maddox and the insurance men who were his friends. Whenever one heard loose talk of a political appointment there were rapid and important words in reply, on rising insurance rates. As deeply as old Tom himself the insurance men hated politics and politicians. Let the police force change complexion with administrations if it must, but keep the dirty stuff out of more serious business.

But some men will dare anything once. So it happened that one afternoon in January, when a house cleaning had just been finished at the city hall and the new mayor sat behind a desk filled with flowers, Paddy McCann saw the front door of his quarters swing open, and Battalion Chief Casey strolled in. A good fireman, Casey; still young, he had earned promotion rapidly, and his name had been inscribed more than once on the medals that are passed out for bravery.

SMILING Dan Casey, men called him, and it was easy to believe that his grandfather did his courting in the shade of the Blarney Stone. He was red headed, with a wide, loose hung grin, and his

mouth was packed full of compliments and rich, broad wit. He was popular, as the saying goes; every one liked him, Paddy McCann along with the rest.

"Hello, Paddy—" the brogue on his tongue would have coated a water tower —"how's yourself? And that's fine, sir. May I have a minute of your valu'ble time, if you can lean your ear away from the radio long enough to listen to me. I got a story to tell you. It's about the two Scotchmen—"

"I've heard it, Chief," Paddy answered good humoredly, and removed his feet with dignity from the top of the steam radiator. "It ain't much of a story."

"I'll improve on it," Casey promised with that high laugh of his, and followed the captain upstairs. But somehow the story was forgotten, once they sat facing each other across the company commander's tidy desk. "I've come for a bit of serious talk," Casey admitted. "Will you listen to me?"

"I'll listen if it costs nothing," Paddy agreed, "and if I don't got to answer any questions that might be incriminatin'."

"It's news," the battalion chief answered. "His brand new Honor has appointed a fire commissioner."

"Aye?" Paddy nodded. He had expected as much.

"It's Monk Francis he's appointed, that's your friend and mine," the battalion chief said, and sat back to watch the effect of his words. He was not disappointed.

"Monk Francis? Fire commissioner?" Paddy McCann let his suspenders snap back against his chest as he slipped his thumbs out and brought both palms down to his knees. He leaned forward, staring. "The Monk to be fire commissioner?"

"None other. It will be announced in tonight's papers. That's good news, ain't it?"

Paddy twisted his face, which was large as a ham, and screwed his left eye shut. He relieved himself of a spurt of tobacco before he saw fit to reply. And then he spoke plainly.

"Alderman Francis is a friend, yes, of a sort. But what's he know about the fire business?"

Casey laughed.

"He ain't supposed to know. That's what a commissioner's for, Cap. Don't need to know the diff'rince between a double-male coupling and a pitot gage. That's one of the beauties of democracy, as any newspaper will tell you, if you waste your time on the editorial page. We get ingrown in this business and the small brains we bring into it get smoked brown. So they pick out somebody to be commissioner that's fresh and enthusiastic, and not cramped with prejudiced ideas. And Monk Francis is the man." He looked at Paddy shrewdly.

"If it's somebody that don't know nothing," Paddy replied soberly, ignoring the look, "there's nobody this side o' Kerry that's so able to fill the bill. He don't know nothing and he can't learn. He's a friend of mine, sure, in his place. And his place is on the by-laws committee and the resolutions committee and sich. As a fire commissioner he's a false alarm."

"You judge him too harsh, Cap," Casey retorted, offering a cigar. "He'll make a grand commissioner. He's got the sense we've been lacking in the office. He'll be making changes for the good of the business, and it was them I come to see you about."

Paddy scowled again. He refused the cigar.

"There's changes," he affirmed, "and then again there's changes."

"That's well said," Smiling Dan Casey agreed enthusiastically. "Changes and changes. These will be to your liking. The Old Man—old Tom Maddox—he's got one foot in the grave, as you know, and the other on a ripe banana peel. He's played out. And besides, he's no friend of yours, Cap, and you know it."

"It's true, all you say."

"Then—" Casey lowered his voice—"I can tell you in confidence. He's slated. He's goin' to retire."

"It would be a blessing to the business."

"You're a man of wits, Cap McCann.

All he needs is a shove. And there's this more—" here Casey looked cautiously over his shoulder—"I'm going to succeed him, and you go up to battalion chief."

Captain Paddy McCann leaned forward, cupping his hand to his right ear. An expression of amazement crossed his big, ham-like face.

"Do I understand you, sir? You go up to Big Boss?"

"You understand perfect, Paddy," the battalion chief answered smoothly. "And you go up a notch with me. All we need is one big blaze—a getaway job; something for the newspaper boys to make smoke pictures of, and it's fire's out for old Tom."

McCann stood up unsteadily.

"You mean that?"

"Just that."

A minute Captain Paddy stared at him. His face hardened. This time it was Smiling Dan who returned the challenging look, although his mouth still hung loose.

"Why, you poor leaky coupling, you!"

McCann threw away discretion. Casey, being Casey, hung on to his to the end. Only his hands twitched under McCann's words, as the captain deliberately, with no regret, started another feud.

"You wore out pump valve!" he shouted. "Would you go throwin' a spanner into the works? *You* for Big Boss?" His tone was plainly contemptuous. "You ain't got it in you, and I say it to your grinning face! Politics? After all these years, you tripe would go putting dirty politics into the business and draggin' me along with you? Out of my office, sir, afore I lose my sense o' deecipline and throw you through the winder! By the holy hydrants, I'd knock you for a row of standpipes if ever I heard you mention my name in such a deal again!"

"You forget yourself, Paddy!" the battalion chief warned softly. "Use your head. It means getting rid of a man that's been no friend of yours and mine, and putting a good friend in his place."

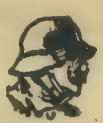
"That's true, he ain't my friend," Paddy McCann retorted. "But it's one thing to retire an old-timer honest, and another to black him up with politics."

"It means promotion to you," Casey interrupted, still hoping to win his man. "And it ain't politics. One big fire—one hot getaway from old Tom, and it's his pants, see? Politics has got nothin' to do with it, and it's his own fault. And as for promotin' me, I'm young; I got years ahead, and I'd like to see anybody that's worked harder."

"Get outside," Paddy McCann answered stalwartly. "Outside, and you can stay out. And if they ever make you Big Boss, there will be my resignation on your desk, you dirty ward heeler. You and Monk Francis! You can stew and fry, both o' you, and a pleasant to hell with you and good day!"

He stood, feet spread angrily, hands clamped behind him. Still refusing the challenge of the other's words, Smiling Dan Casey buttoned his jacket, nodded cheerfully and picked up his cap. He examined the double crossed trumpets on the front of it for a moment before he spoke.

"It's too bad," he said softly. "I withdraw what I promised about you going up in the business, Cap. You're going out. Unless—" he grinned again—"unless you show judgment and sense. I'll be watching you. Think it over. Judgment, remember, and I'll have my ear to the joker."



PADDY McCANN watched with a grim face as the battalion chief walked unhurriedly to the door. He listened through the pole hole in the office floor while Casey delayed in the apparatus room below, exchanging loud pleasantries with the men. Then the outer door slammed.

"The dirty politician!" Paddy repeated. "Well, here's a district, for one, where there ain't going to be no big fires."

He walked back stiffly to his desk and sat down. He was surprised at Casey, amazed at his suggestion. He had been one of those who liked him,

had he? He knew why the battalion chief had approached him. He had supposed Paddy's old quarrel with Tom would act as a torch now for this shoddy business. But personal quarrels vanished under the circumstances, at least so far as Captain Paddy McCann was concerned.

Big Tom had lost his grip, to be sure, and he should go. Go of his own accord, if he had sense enough. Make a speech of acceptance, written by one of the newspaper boys, when the department gave him a solid gold watch. Get out gracefully.

He should go, but who should succeed him? Let politics into the seat of the chief's red buggy? Let a lot of scheming wardsmen, that didn't know a fire from a flood, go cluttering up the desk tops in the marshal's office with their feet? Let Alderman Francis, who already had got rich on new school buildings and the intersecting sewer, jump into another job where he could pay three prices for poor equipment?

Paddy would be damned—defiantly. Yes, sir, he'd be damned! Smiling Dan Casey wanted trouble, eh? Then he should have it—but there'd be no getaway job in this end of the Third Battalion, if it cost Paddy McCann his bugles. In the meantime— He stiffened suddenly and listened. Through the pole hole in the floor sounded the staccato voice of the joker alarm.

Three taps. Nine taps. 2—1—2. A call for Engine 39. Signed by the fire alarm office. If Engine 39 rolled north, Truck 19 would follow.

Paddy's ire cooled rapidly as the prospect of labor approached. Politics could wait. He took three short steps to the pole hole and, leaning out, rested his shoulder against the brass pole. He had a good crew below stairs. Their talk had ceased uneasily. Paddy watched through the circular hole in the floor. Haggerty, senior ladderman, hunched over the alarm board, the telephone receiver jammed against his left ear, his right stuffed shut with a finger. Under Paddy's hard, gray, watchful eyes he straightened without excitement, like the old reliable fireman that he was, slowly, as if he had eternity. The receiver dropped back on the hook of the instrument. Haggerty's left hand felt experimentally under the board. At once gongs banged out their message.

"She's a go!" the senior ladderman shouted hoarsely. "Go, boys! We roll!"

Paddy's arms circled the pole, his knees gripped it, ankles around its shining surface. He thought of Battalion Chief Casey as he slid. His first hot rage at the senior officer was gone, but in Paddy's case that meant cold determination had followed.

The joker alarm already was rattling off the answer of Engine 39.

5—5—5—3—9.

"We're on our way," the captain of that company was signaling. Paddy felt the sharp slap of the floor against his shoe soles, leaped rapidly, three steps to the board. His thumb pressed open the circuit; his finger banged his own message—

5—5—5—3—2—9.

"Weber and Prospect," Haggerty was telling him in an easy, matter of fact voice. "Prospect and Weber. Northwest corner. That would be the shoe store."

"Aye!"

Paddy swung up to his seat beside the driver. It would, worse luck, be the shoe store. He yanked the bell lanyard with his left hand, with his right stretched upward and jerked the dangling string that set in motion the door openers. As the wide panels swung in and a cold wind leaped into the room, Paddy heard the joker still chattering. Squad 1 and an insurance patrol were on their way.

Moses, the driver, asked—

"Ready?"

Paddy glanced back along the great bony skeleton of the truck.

He had a good crew now, didn't he? Harkness, the rawboned tillerman, already had mounted his high perch at the rear, had spread his feet against the rungs of the prone aerial ladder, and was gripping the wide wheel firmly. Haggerty, McKinnie and Burgess, the recruit, clung to the left running board; Gallheimer and Fitzgerald to the right.

"Go," Paddy commanded.

The bell clattered. The siren squealed. The truck swung south. Five blocks—five minutes. Engine 39 already was laying hose. Smoke swirled above the slushy pavement. A five-story brick building loomed indistinctly through brown haze on the northwest corner. A crowd already was pressing in, hampering the first efforts of pipemen, running with their line. The flying squadron racketed in from the south. Insurance patrolmen in their red helmets ran with hand extinguishers. At the alarm box on the corner a gray haired battalion chief already was pulling a second alarm.

He turned as Paddy McCann trotted up dependably to him.

"Shaft," he shouted. "Raise your aerial. Knock the top off the shaft and ventilate. Take a line off Engine 14. She'll be the next in. Here she comes. Drown it down from above."

He was gone, the tails of his rubber jacket flapping about his heels. Paddy signaled his own apparatus forward. Its siren grunted as it nosed ahead through the hampering crowd. A policeman with a persuasive nightstick cleared a path. The big truck halted directly in front of the doors. Smoke rolled in a brown stream through the broken glass and out across the sidewalk.

"Extend!" Paddy yelled.

HARKNESS lifted the wheel expertly off the tiller shaft and hung it to its hook on the right side. He swung the pivoted seat around to the left, out of the way. The crew had run forward from places on the sides and mounted the deck.

"Easy," Paddy warned. "Watch them wires. Up easy with it."

The eighty-five foot ladder trembled as the pressure of the springs was released slowly against it. It swung up suddenly, hesitated, lifted again. Paddy McCann, guiding it, spun a handcrank and the main ladder faced the building. It teetered thus while Haggerty and Fitzgerald ground the fly ladder upward. The top slid past the roof and rested gently against the cornice.

McCann mounted first, his ax in his belt. Haggerty, Gallheimer and Burgess followed, each with a fifty-foot length of hose coiled on his shoulder. The ladder line already was in place. It had mounted, strapped to the rungs of the rising ladder. Only the three sections for the roof need be carried, and three more sections laid on the ground and coupled to engine and ladder line.

It was smoky atop the building. Burning leather always makes a bad smudge. Add to it the hot smoke of tissue paper and cardboard boxes and the acrid fumes of burning shoe polish, and it is a heart breaking job—fighting a shoe store fire.

The roof lay flat. Its tin still was cool, with a sooty layer of dirty snow covering it. There was no sign of fire. Smoke gushed out of the penthouse above the elevator shaft, rolling clouds, black, gray and red. It was hot smoke; it rose quickly. Paddy charged toward it. He heard the thump of hose sections dropped from tired shoulders behind him, heard Haggerty's crisp orders.

"Unroll that length," the senior ladderman was commanding. "Lay it out and couple second section to it. Who's got the pipe—the pipe, I say. Burgess, got the pipe?"

Paddy saw the hose unwinding, saw his full crew on the roof or poking heads over the parapet. Now was the time for action. Drown this blaze quickly. Get the job done. There was too much else to think of this morning to spend a lot of time on a fire! Politics! The dirty rascals! Politics in the fire business?

He was running—a man can think a lot in forty steps. His ax slipped out of his belt. There was a skylight over the shaft. It lay low against the roof, the peak hardly higher than his head. Smoke poured out around the edges of the glass. It seeped through a thousand cracks in the tin sides. The fire was crawling upward on the lower floors. As soon as it reached the third floor or thereabouts it would push a great wave of heat before it and break the

glass. Then it would puff up. All at once. Stick a long red tongue out of the roof. Howl. Paddy had seen hundreds of such fires. He knew what to expect. Knew how to fight it. He must catch it before it broke the glass and made fresh drafts. He needed water quickly.

He poised, with ax raised. Through smoke he saw his line running toward him across the roof.

"Water!" he screamed. "Haggerty!" Where were those lazy devils? "Water! Charge the line! Take nozzle! Take pipe! Be ready!"

Squealing sirens in the street answered him; these and the yell of fire. A hot breath of heat swept past. That glass wouldn't last long. He must have water. Now. No excuse if the fire got up here and no water to meet it. He waded through smoke toward the cornice. Haggerty was leaning over it, shouting. Harkness, straddling its edge, waved both arms, signaling some one below. Fitzgerald, back a little from the edge, gripped the open, gaping end of a hose section.

"Water!" Paddy cried. "For the love o' ladders—"

"Forgot the pipe!" the senior ladderman explained huskily. He did not look at his captain. "I've sent Burgess for it."

"Forgot the pipe? *Forgot* it? Fight fire without a nozzle? Are you daft, man—?"

Paddy teetered where he was, red of face. It was Burgess' job to bring the pipe; but *his* job to tell Burgess what size tip; and today, for the first time in his life, he had forgotten the order. There'd be hell to pay if a higher-up found *that* out—and Casey would be looking for trouble from now on. A roar interrupted his thoughts.

Glass showered out of the top of the shaft. Fire howled through it. A tall red arm thrust into the air, waving triumphantly. The thin layer of sooty snow melted at once. Dirty water ran down the gently sloping tin.

Paddy peered overside. A man was climbing. He carried a long brass pipe. On his head he wore a white helmet. It wasn't Burgess. Wasn't any common ladderman. Only a boss wears a white fire hat, chief of department, assistant and deputy marshals, battalion chiefs.

"Cost me my bugles," Paddy muttered.

The man climbed over the edge. It was old Tom Maddox himself. He carried a nozzle in his thin hand. His face was grim.

Haggerty grabbed the nozzle. But he could not get close to the shaft now. Too hot. No man could live there. Probably have to get off the roof in five minutes. That fire would mushroom under the wooden bridgework.

"Forget a pipe?" old Tom was screaming. "Have I got to bring your pants up to you maybe, Paddy McCann?"

Paddy, speechless, took from Fitzgerald the limp end of the line. He clamped it between his knees, straightened the brass coupling, and Haggerty twisted the butt of the nozzle into it.

"Need a nurse girl, maybe?" It was Chief Tom.

Paddy ignored him.

"Water!" he bellowed. "Charge—line!"

HARKNESS, waiting at the cornice, again swung his arms. The couplings hissed. Air whistled in the tip. The crew trotted forward. They gripped the pipe and line, glancing back as they did so at the chief. His thin brows were bulged.

Water spurted, for an instant a brown sluggish stream with a dusty look about it. Then it stiffened and drove like a hard fist against the crumbling sides of the penthouse. Paddy, giving Chief Maddox no second look, clamped his fingers about the tip. He had a job of work now. He'd hear enough from Maddox later—

Haggerty, braced opposite him, leaned forward slightly, his own gloves holding firmly to the forward end of the pipe. The senior ladderman blamed himself, it was apparent from his red face. Fitzgerald and Gallheimer, crowding behind them, clung tenaciously to the kicking butt. The others, straggling from the cornice, grasped the line at the rear of the nozzle.

"Up a bit," Paddy ordered. The stream

bored a round black hole in the flame. "Up a bit more."

Tom Maddox tramped toward him.

"You, McCann, report to me when the job's done. At my office. In the meantime, drown it if you can. I'll send you help—help that won't come up without their pipes."

He turned away, testily. Engines, answering the four-eleven alarm, cluttered the pavements below, filling the wintry air with the cries of their sirens and the throb of chesty motors. A water tower, lifting its tall neck timidly like a lost giraffe, with a sudden ferocity spat a violent three-inch stream into a top floor window. A panting squad crew carried a second line up the ladder of Truck 19. Engine 98 followed, climbing deliberately over the cornice. Paddy McCann pressed forward. Heat pounding against his face set his eyebrows to stretching and pulled the sore skin tight over his cheekbones.

"Up a bit more," he ordered.

He heard his men curse with what little breath was left them. Let 'em curse! He was going to drown this fire now. Going to lead the battle against the shaft, throw enough water to drive back the blaze, be first in at the charred edge, first to tip his pipe downward into the roaring floors below. He'd show Maddox—

He glanced backward after five minutes. The Big Boss had gone. Engine 98 was drilling away, five yards behind him. The squad company, attacking from the flank, was closing in over at the left. The fire leaped with less gusto. Gray smoke took the place of black, the anemic gray smoke that means plenty of water is finding its way to the fire.

Above the howl of battle Paddy made out once more the cry of sirens far across high roofs. More apparatus was racing to help. Old Tom had pulled a special alarm. Ten more engines, probably, ten in addition to the fifteen here already. There'd be help a-plenty in a quarter-hour. If they could hold it that long. If it did not explore too far under the roof, did not burn too fiercely in the wooden bridging there.

"Up a bit," Paddy insisted. "Haggerty, move up."

Water was drumming underneath them. It might be the stream of the water tower, might be new companies working from fourth floor windows. The smoke turned a lighter gray. They were beating it. Closing in. Old Tom would be telling the newspaper boys that he had the job under control, if all went well for ten minutes. He'd be telling the truth too—and it wouldn't be thanks to Ladder Company 19.

"Get to the edge, you," Paddy commanded. "Tip that pipe down. We'll show these home guards how to put out a fire."

They pulled at the stiff fabric line, bent the nozzle downward so that the stream caught under the edge of the tin roof and forced back the steaming rusty metal. Paddy was just straightening up when he heard a voice shouting his name.

He turned his head slowly, keeping one eye on the fire. It was Casey—Battalion Chief Casey—with a streak of soot across his nose and the grin hanging loose on his lips. He was walking easily, as if he had ages to deliver his message, and as if heat and smoke and the danger of burned timbers under his feet meant nothing to him.

"Paddy, it's a grand job you done, stopping it like this." His voice, to Paddy's surprise, was affable. He leaned familiarly over the captain's shoulder. "I came in on third. It was an avalanche of water you was dropping. I says to the boys down there, 'Who's that up above doin' this grand job?' and they says, 'Some truck outfit,' and I says, 'It's McCann then and his boys. They ain't another gang o' laddermen in the business that's equal to it.' That's what I said."

Paddy returned his gaze uneasily to the fire. Without answering the battalion chief he gave all his attention to the tip. It bent downward once more. The stream was raking the sides of the shaft. Engine 98 had crawled almost abreast of him. The squad company was picking its way, warily, over the hot tin, wetting a path. Again Casey spoke heartily:

"Faith, and didn't I near forget my

message. The Big Boy is hollering for you, Cap. Sent me up. Want's to speak to you personal now. Said as you would turn over command to your senior and come along." He lowered his voice. "The old devil's in a temper over something."

Paddy nodded to Haggerty.

"Take the tip," he bade quietly. "Keep a-washing. I'm goin' down and get my lickin'."

He followed Casey down the ladder, already choked with three round, throbbing lines of hose. Below him, when he glanced through brown haze at the street, the pavement was spattered with crimson apparatus. A score of engines roared. But there was less desperate effort in their voices. The job was won. Motors purred triumphantly. The water tower still flung its mighty stream into a window. Extension ladders from the service trucks tipped against blackened window ledges, each with its line of hose strapped to the rungs.

Paddy made out the shiny black top and crimson and gilt sides of old Tom's buggy near the opposite corner. He recognized the long white slicker of the chief of department.

WATER swirled ankle deep on the pavement. Regardless of it, the old chief stood with his white booted feet spread apart and hands on his hips, elbows spread out. He looked tired. His face was drawn. His words would blister, and they'd be unfair, Paddy knew; but Lord, hadn't the Old Man climbed! Behind him now newspapermen clustered, their press cards in the rims of their hats. A policeman, idling at the edge of the crowd, ate peanuts nonchalantly from his side pocket.

Paddy walked stiffly toward old Tom. He recognized the ladder captain at thirty paces. Paddy saluted.

"Was you sendin' for me?"

Beyond the chief Paddy made out the beefy figure of the city's new mayor, and beside the mayor, Monk Francis. They were watching him thoughtfully as he approached; at the first words from Maddox both stepped forward quickly.

"You're a disgrace to the business, McCann," Big Tom was accusing. "Go up topside and leave your pipe on the ground! It's the devil's wonder you don't forget your truck in the house when respondin' sometimes!"

"Yes, sir," Paddy answered.

"Don't yes-sir me, McCann! What's your excuse? Who left the pipe below? I'll have his badge, I will, and I don't give a weepin' damn who it was. Who'd you tell to carry pipe?"

"I told no one."

"Told no one? Haven't you somebody assigned to that bit of work whenever you lift ladder?"

"Yes, sir. The recruit. Burgess is his name. But it was not his fault. I neglected to tell him what size tip. That was my job —to say what size. And then he'd of brung it. If you've any objections to make, sir, make 'em to me."

"Objections, you say? No, I've no objections. I've charges, if that's what you mean. You and your impudence—I've stood enough of it, devil save me!"

"What's this, sir?" the new mayor demanded in a big, husky voice.

"He leaves his nozzle on the ground, your Honor, and he's slow in the bargain. I come rolling in here to see what's happening and they tell me McCann's on the roof, and he's got a fine show of knocking down the fire from above. So I wait for some action. I listen for him to holler for water. But he don't. Not a sound. The line stays flat. And then I see a man come slippin' down, and it's the nozzle he's after. The nozzle, mind you, your Honor, and the fire blazing up brighter every minute. Why, I had to take it myself—and have my driver pull a four-bagger and a special call for ten more pumps, thanks to his carelessness. I'll file charges—"

"A minute, Chief," Monk Francis interrupted. He was a small, lean faced man with prominent teeth and a flat nose. His voice was important, but smooth as a well oiled hose roller. "I was having a word with Battalion Chief Casey just now. And from what I get, it was this same Captain McCann who walked up to the fire, once

he got that nozzle, and it was him that drowned it out. I think those are Casey's words. Drowned it out. Kept it from spreading, simply by walking up to it like the fireman he is—"

Old Tom Maddox spit.

"Casey said that? It's like him. But compliments don't put out fire, sir. And they don't do the discipline no good. I'm filing charges—"

"I advise you to think this over," Monk Francis began. "I'm the new commissioner, you know—"

"I've heard as much," Maddox shouted. "And I know where your office is. You've no more reason to go interfering with discipline than that off wheel on that pumper. It ain't in your province, and if you'll take the time to read your book of rules, you'll find it wrote plain. If I decide to file charges, you nor his Honor here nor nobody else has a word to say about it."

There was an uneasy silence.

"Merely a suggestion, Chief," Monk Francis said apologetically; but there was a sign of amusement around the corners of his mouth. "I know, of course, that in the field you are supreme. I haven't a word to say."

"I thought not," old Tom grunted. "Go back to your company, McCann," he commanded. "I'll decide on what action when I get back to quarters."

Paddy saluted and turned toward his ladder. Old Tom had made the most of a bad matter, more than it deserved. His reasons for doing so were plain. It was less plain why Battalion Chief Casey, through Monk Francis, should go to so much trouble defending a captain with whom he recently had had words himself. Paddy climbed the ladder doggedly, his throat full of anger.

Haggerty, a little sheepishly, returned command to him. He saw the inquiring expressions of his men. He merely said—

"Wash down that other side there; that's it."

Within an hour, just as the daylight faded from the smoky sky, he shut off his stream. Engine 98 already was picking up heavy lengths of wet hose. The squad company had dropped its line, and with axes, pike poles and wrecking bars, was exploring the soggy interior.

Smiling Dan Casey strolled nonchalantly across the roof.

"It was a grand job of stopping you done, Paddy," he affirmed cheerfully. He ignored Paddy's scowling face. "There's a lot of satisfaction on the ground. I saw to it that the newspaper boys got the story—"

"What story?" Paddy demanded truculently.

"Why, how you stopped it. How Truck 19 walked right in and got et up by fire but held the job down. It was an elegant piece of work. I've talked with Monk Francis, and he's pleased as a tabby cat."

"You've my gratitude for that," Paddy answered ironically. "I'll be facing charges for the grand job."

"You'll not," Casey contradicted. His cheerfulness was persistent. "I'll see to that. Roll up your line now. We're leaving a couple of wash-down streams inside, them and the squads to turn over the ruin. Go home and get a bath and some rest. You're needin' it."

The members of the crew, who had been listening, eyed one another wonderingly as they broke connections at the ends of fifty-foot sections and rolled the hose into buns. Thirty minutes later, by the glare of searchlights, they lowered their aerial and with slow bell turned toward quarters. The forgotten nozzle was not mentioned, at least within Paddy's hearing.

THAT night at his desk he morosely reviewed the events of the shoe store fire. He had been to blame. But many a company before this had made a mistake. Old Tom Maddox himself had let more than one fire get away from him, simply because he forgot something.

But this had not resulted in a getaway. Paddy had made amends for his mistake. He had drowned out the blaze, and he did not need Smiling Dan Casey to tell him how well he had done it. He knew. It had been a good job at the end. And it had

not been necessary for Maddox to bring that pipe up the ladder himself. Burgess already had it, had yanked it off the tailboard of Engine 42, and was running with it when old Tom halted him. The chief had merely seized an excuse to fan up an old feud.

He had made the most of an accident. Why? To show the new administration in the city hall who was boss? Was he planning to get rid of the few men in the business who did not knuckle under to him? Paddy was in that list, all right. Nor was his position illogical so far as he could see. He was no friend of Chief Maddox. But in spite of that, Captain Paddy McCann would have no share in dirty politics.

Paddy waited impatiently for the call to department headquarters. On the third day after the fire, Casey strolled into the apparatus room. He was still noticeably friendly. The men welcomed him, Paddy thought; especially Haggerty, who was sitting in front of the radio. Paddy had just finished his daily report card and was descending the stairs, licking the flap of the envelop.

"How's things?" Casey demanded. "If this ain't the most musical house in the district! It's a shock to me you don't take that radio on runs with you. And how's Captain McCann?"

"Very good, sir," Paddy answered shortly.

He led the way to his office at once. For some reason he did not wish the crew to overhear again all that Casey might say. The battalion chief began enthusiastically.

"And did you see the nice writeup in the papers after the shoestore job? It give you credit, all right. It was me got it for you. You deserved it, and I'm a man that believes in praisin' when you've got it comin' to you. I understand, though—" here he lowered his voice—"it don't set very good with old Tom. He was ready to eat you alive. Talking of charges. Old woman way of getting even. First chance in twenty-year to land something on you and didn't dare do it after what the papers said! It'll be heaven's blessing for sure when he's out."

"It will that," Paddy agreed.

"And a good man and a good friend o' yours takes his place," Casey added.

Paddy looked through the window.

"It's going to snow some more," he stated noncommittally.

"Don't be dumb, Paddy."

"I ain't," Paddy flared. "I see the sense to what you say. We need a new chief. I've no more likin' for Tom Maddox than I got for a cellar full of carbide. But as I told you before—"

Casey laughed.

"There's no use repeatin'. You said enough first time. Only, I want you to think over the disgraceful treatment you give me the other day, and the kind I give you back over at the shoe store, when you was for fighting fire without a pipe. I'll leave it to your judgment which was politer. In the meantime, good day to you."

Paddy sat a long time, uncomfortably, after the battalion chief was gone. So Casey thought him ungrateful. He was right in one or two things. Tom Maddox had brought the old quarrel to a head unfairly. He had done it purposely, threatened charges with the company, the department, the new mayor, and the city listening. It would be a hard, thankless battle running Truck 19 to suit him from now on.

But on the other hand there were Casey and Monk Francis, both crookeder than a gooseneck cellar pipe. It would be money in their pockets if they could force Chief Maddox out. And yet, sooner or later, unless *they* removed old Tom first, Tom would remove Paddy McCann.

Paddy felt his convictions wavering as he sat down unhappily that night to his pork and potatoes and onions.

"We got to watch our step whenever we get a call to roll, boys," he said before lifting his fork. "We got to keep the little ones little in our district, and if there's an ape among you goes cluttering the aerial among the light wires overhead, he'd best start runnin' before I can lay hands on a spanner."

The company ate in silence. Twice their

knives poised while the joker key, out where Burgess stood watch, rattled off a still alarm. Both times the calls were for companies far on the outskirts of the city, and the crew of Truck 19 again resumed eating.

That night, and all of Paddy's next twenty-four hour shift, Truck 19 did not turn a wheel. It was on his third tour of duty, after his talk with Smiling Dan, that the alarm banged in just after the change of shifts at seven minutes past eight in the morning. Winter had fled the city temporarily. The sun shone diligently through the haze of industrial smoke.

Captain McCann stood in front of the blackboard, reading the night's report of alarms and special duty calls. There had been little business, he observed with satisfaction; not a single multiple alarm, nothing in any high value district, and the few stills that were followed by boxes were tapped out within a quarter-hour. He was rereading the terse symbols of the code when the box alarm instrument stirred.

Its steel jaws began to chew their message in the ticker tape—a long stuttering row of dots. Paddy grabbed the fluttering end of the paper in his big fist. A worried scowl set rapidly on his face.

Eight punches—one punch—

"Get set, boys!" he yelled.

Seven more punches in a row. Box 817 that was, Sturgis and Almon Streets.

"Roll!" he cried.

THE CREW leaped for places. With thundering bell Truck 19 turned south on its way. Paddy McCann would not be late this morning. He would forget nothing, forget no nozzle, no ax or strap or pike pole; neither would he forget the watchful eyes and acid temper of the Big Boss, nor Chief Casey's smooth compliments. The location of that alarm box was a bad one, down in the heart of the old factory district, where oil soaked floors and dry old walls were the terror of any good fireman.

Old Tom might well pray to be saved from any trouble in this district. Any fire, unless promptly whipped, might easily be a getaway job. Paddy's truck never went that far on stills. Only a box call or a second alarm extended its district to number 817.

Engine 42 was there ahead of Ladder Truck 19, as were Squad 1 and Engine 18. Paddy felt a moment of relief as he swung into Almon Street. The building at which the crowd stared was an old loft packed with small manufactories. But there was no smoke. No sign of fire. It might be a bucket job. He probably would not have to lift a hand. That would satisfy him.

A racketing bell from the south announced the arrival of a long crimson car. The chief of department.

Paddy halted his truck fifty paces north of the intersection. The coming of the chief puzzled him. Why would Maddox himself run in on a first box? Haggerty, as if guessing his thought, said:

"I hear the Old Man's taking all firsts in some districts himself. He don't aim for there to be any getaway jobs."

"I see," Paddy said slowly. But he didn't—unless the chief had some inkling of what Casey and the Monk planned to do to him. "There's a bit of smudge, after all," he muttered.

An insurance patrol with fire extinguishers was backing out of a wide doorway. Smoke seeped after them. Engine 42 was laying hose. Other apparatus was arriving noisily.

"Cellar," some one panted, running past. "It's got a holt."

Old Tom slid quickly from his own machine, and in his thin voice began to demand news. An engine company shouted:

"Lots of old boxes in the basement. Good holt."

"Truck 19 reports, sir," Paddy yelled.

The chief eyed him a moment and then answered:

"You don't need a line. Basement. Axes. Go in with first engine crew. Take your tools."

His voice was impersonal. Paddy signaled his company. They came running, with pike poles, mattocks, wrecking bars. One line of hose, still flat, already was

stretched through the door. A second outfit was advancing heavily about its nozzle. Squadmen pried up a sidewalk grating. A thin string of black smoke burst out. Old Tom, at Paddy's heels, motioned to the engine company.

"In there quick," he bade, wisely, and pointed to the grating.

Paddy and his men helped the engine crew ease in its line. Then he led his own company in behind them. There was little smoke. And no sign of fire.

"Paper flower factory upstairs," some one said, and Paddy, hearing him, grunted.

Old Tom was pretty smart in coming himself. He waded forward in the darkness, poking ahead with the pike pole. The pole struck a hard wall at length. He pressed along the surface until he found a door. It did not yield.

"Ax," he bade.

He stepped backward, feeling his way while Haggerty stumbled toward him. The blade bit into old rattling wood. Rusty hinges creaked. The door puffed out. A hot cloud of smoke followed.

"Water," Paddy called.

The engine company staggered toward him. Its captain swore. Already men were coughing. Fire shone uncertainly through the wall of smoke.

"Water!" Paddy repeated. "Charge your line, you apes!"

A heavy voice back at the grating took up the cry. But before the first hiss of the nozzle announced the approaching stream, a fresh draft blew past and the rear cellar room filled with light—a hot, white, incandescent glare, as the blaze found life after long, sulky confinement.

Paddy, through blinding eyelids, saw a stairway angling out of a corner. Fire ran up its dusty treads. Paper flower shop above? He knew what paper flowers meant. Might as well be a house full of gunpowder. Eat up the building in five minutes.

Heat assailed the engine company. Paddy ducked his head and for a moment the rim of his helmet protected his face. Then more heat squeezed up past it, shutting his eyes. He heard the engine crew backing out. He yelled at them, protesting. He felt Haggerty and Moses, on hands and knees, a little distance behind him.

"Grab that engine's line, Truck 19!" he bellowed. "We ain't going out!"

A new voice broke through the turmoil.

"Who's that up front?" it was demanding. "McCann?"

It was Casey. Paddy could not hear his next order. He was too busy taking the line from the engine crew. Then Smiling Dan's voice came nearer.

"Outside every one!"

"Outside, hell!" Paddy McCann retorted. "Take a holt, Haggerty! Moses!"

There was no answer. Paddy twisted his head. Had his men deserted?

"Outside—all of you!" Casey was repeating. "Paddy McCann, out!"

"I just got here!" Paddy shouted back.

"Out!"

"I'm hittin' her elegant," Paddy cried.

His lips were cracking. Leave paper flowers? If it got up that stairway, there'd be another bad fire.

Casey was crawling toward him.

"Paddy, you fool! Now's your chance."

"Where's me men?"

"I ordered 'em out."

"Ordered my men out?"

"Drop pipe and beat it!" Casey commanded.

McCANN in reply drove his stream at the stairway. The great nozzle tried to twist out of his hands and again he reduced the shut-off valve. He'd be damned if he'd quit so soon! He had a chance of beating this fire. It was still confined to one room. Old Tom was right in placing men here—nobody could hit it from above.

Casey was at his side.

"The Old Man's running this show, Paddy. Beat it! It's his funeral. Leave it go!"

"Leave it go?"

"It's the getaway job we've been aching for, Paddy! Tomorrow—"

"Getaway job? Why, you dirty crook!"

Rage overpowered Paddy. He swung his tip. Its stream caught the surprised battalion chief directly on the chest. He sprawled under the driving pressure. Paddy growled aloud. It was exactly what he meant to do. He shut down the valve until only a thin spray charged out. He could hold that better, guide it with one hand. It was dangerous business, playing alone with a heavy stream.

The spray cooled the air. Paddy jammed his helmet tighter, then, reaching out, dragged at Casey with his left hand. His fingers caught the smooth surface of the white rubber coat. He jerked it angrily toward him, flung his superior officer down atop the throbbing hose. With his foot he pressed him firmly across it. Then he opened the stream.

"Hold that down!" he ordered Casey. "Lay on it hard! Getaway job? I'll teach you!" The chief rolled slightly. Paddy booted him back on the line. "Lay where I put you or I'll give you the works!" he shouted. "It's a neat pressure!"

Casey lay still thereafter. Paddy turned his smoke filled eyes to the storage room. A minute passed—two—three. He was knocking it. Fire no longer tried to climb the stairway. He propped himself on his elbows, straddling the butt of the pipe, gripping it with his knees, clamping his hands tight about the tip.

"Getaway job!" he growled. "Framing him, eh?"

He forgot his own enmity toward old Tom. Forgot the chief's unfairness at the shoe store fire. Forgot everything except the single, unforgetable fact that a battalion chief was scheming for a getaway job. In league with fire—and politics. Planning to put an old man on the shelf by dirty means.

He reduced his stream and pulled Casey forward. The battalion chief's eyes were open. He was conscious.

"Move up, you dirty ward heeler!" Paddy commanded. "Now lay hard on it again. We're knocking it, me and you. Maybe you will put that in the papers!" He turned, listening. "Here comes my boys," he muttered. "Thought they wouldn't stay out long!"

The crew crawled in sheepishly. In ten minutes the engine company came back. Another truck, two squad crews ventured in. The cellar was packed with smoke. Axes bit into the floor above, ventilating. Water dripped. The air cooled. Paddy staggered to his feet, pulling Battalion Chief Casey after him.

"Guess you can walk now," he said.

Out in the street they faced old Tom and the new commissioner and the newspaper boys.

"Talk," Paddy ordered Casey huskily. "Tell these reporters, was it a getaway?"

Casey shook his head.

"It was a proper job, gents," Paddy explained. "Tom Maddox's orders. We went in and done our best. Ain't that true, Casey?" He prodded the battalion chief's arm. "Say yes. Not much of a fire. Just a lot of trash. No getaway job, at least; no getaway job, a-tall. Casey helped me. Give him a good write-up, boys. Nice job Casey done. His last. He's leavin' the fire business."

Casey lifted his head quickly and stared at him.

"He's goin' into politics, or something," Paddy explained. "He was just telling me about it down there. He's through in the department, wants to use his talents somewheres else. Ain't that true, Casey?"

The battalion chief still stared at him.

"True," he admitted. "I've got a better job."

"Hear him, gents?" Paddy added. "He's through."

It was Chief Maddox himself who led Paddy toward the big red car and guided him into the seat.

"Give you a ride back," he offered, "and a thankee, too. I guess I understand that talk of a getaway job. They was framin' on me. I'd heard a thing or two. And Paddy, what's a lost nozzle between friends? They's a new openin' for battalion chief, Casey out. I'll make my recommend for it. Without strings. You're deservin'. Me and you is the kind that can run the fire business."

ACCOUNT CLOSED

By COURTNEY McCURDY

DUSK was drifting down on Croydon when the somber, stern faced men,
Measuring justice with a set rule, brought their bitter verdict in.

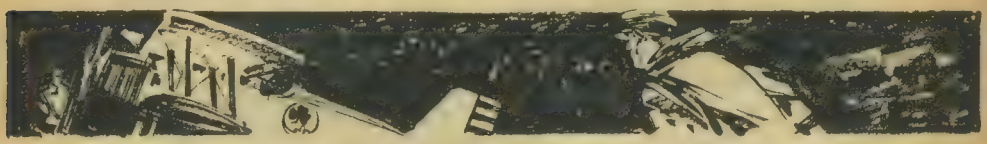
"Stand up, Moore!" rasped Major Orson. The lieutenant stood sword straight,
With his gaze fixed on the major like a leveled lance of hate.
One hard breath of heavy silence cold as smoke that curls from ice,
Then, "A firing squad at sunrise!" crushed him in a frozen vise!

Eight o'clock . . . Ten little hours till the English dawn's gray gloom.
Nightmare-like Moore saw that dawning as he paced his guarded room:
Saw the death squad, felt the blindfold, foreknew all his doom's disgrace;
God of mercy, what a washout for a six-plane V. C. ace . . .

And—for what? A kiwi captain who had dodged last night's patrol
Had blared out, at Moore's sharp censure, with such oaths as scar the soul;
When Moore answered he had struck him, and the blow Moore gave him back
Sent the drunk fool lurching hellward through a prop-blade's buzzsaw track;
It had carved him like a cleaver . . . "Murder," the court-martial said.
Murder? All Moore's fuming fury flared into a savage red.
Was he dog to take a thrashing from a drunken cockney lout?
By God, if the King should strike him then the King had best look out!
Thunder cut across his musing and he peered out through the pane:
Ghostly shapes moved in the moonlight, tuning up a battle plane.

Was it his—he wondered, watching—with green shamrocks on its wings?
Then, why not? Great gods of glory! Blood of ancient Irish kings
Surged and spurred his quickened pulses till they raced at triple time,
Frenzied with the stark mad folly of an impulse half sublime!

Straight and swift he swung a chairleg with the sentry's head for mark,
Snatched the falling guard's blue Webley and sped out across the dark!
As he neared the Bristol Fighter two mechanics barred his way,
But they glimpsed his gleaming Webley and they dodged that gun's grim play.
Orson was inside the cockpit—Orson failed to fly that night.
Moore struck once and heaved him over, then streaked skyward into flight.



As he climbed his brain was racing like the motor of his ship:
He would fly top speed to Dover, claim a special mission trip,
Fill his tanks there to the limit, hop across the Dover Strait,
Hold past Dunkirk, Nieuport, Ostend, daring North Sea, night and Fate,
Cross the shell pocked battle sector, land behind the German line.
Join some Prussian fighting *staffel* and—pay back those British swine!

Conscience raised a halting whisper, but he drowned it with a curse:
What, desertion to the German? Well, a firing squad was worse.
He had spilt his blood for England; she paid bitter coin for wage.
Well, he'd balance that black debit on a new, red ledger page!
Orson had ripped off his buttons . . . Somehow that cut worst of all.
Shame and fury filled and griped him like a nauseous draught of gall.

Climbing fast and near the ceiling suddenly he laughed aloud,
For he saw a silver shadow racing through a ragged cloud!
By Saint George, a raid on London! Swinging in a steep chandelle,
He rode back to watch the raiders lay the eggs that hatch out hell.

Sirens screamed; shells flared; sharp searchlights laced pale ribbons through night's pall;
Devil's mirth set Moore's sides shaking at the grim jest of it all.

High above the shells that blossomed scarlet in those starless lanes,
High above his new claimed comrades—Zeppelin and escort planes,
High above the hated England that had sentenced him to death,
He sailed watching, waiting, gloating . . . Then he banked and caught his breath—

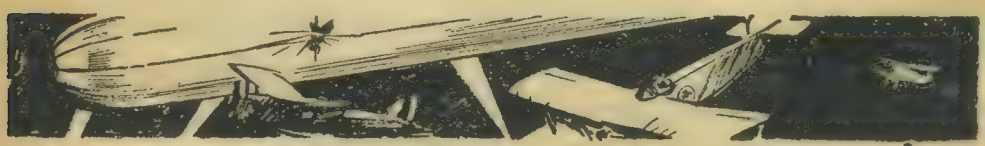
What a hit! The Zep was bombing. Flame spewed up from London's floor.
Instants crawled by long as æons. Then he heard the first far roar.

In that heartbed memory touched him with a biting white hot brand:
Through the last air raid on London he had held a scared child's hand,
Stilled its fears with Irish folk tales, took it—when they blew "all's clear"—
Home . . . Its home was flame wrapped wreckage and that wreck its mother's bier.

His red dream of vengeance vanished like a straw thatch in a flood;
Staring down he saw the bomber through a burning blur of blood.
Women killers! Baby strafers! He league up with such as those?
Veins afire and brain hard frozen he jerked down the Bristol's nose.

Not for honor, not for England! For that thin faced orphaned tot,
For the berserk lust of battle in his pulses pounding hot,
For his heritage from heroes of a thousand years of war,
He drove down upon the raiders like a thunderbolt from Thor!

Like a hundred howling banshees split wind screamed on strut and wire;
Then he hurtled through the escort; one plane fluttered down in fire.
Plunging past the Zep his Vickers vomited a hateful hail;
Up he zoomed then at her belly, but three planes were at his tail.



Through the searchlights' shifting lattice they waged war like wingèd gods.
Moore's heart swelled with sullen glory. One to three? Fair Irish odds!
One more black cross flashed before him and the ship that wore it fell.
"Damn the planes!" a red god chanted. "Strafe that *Zeppelin* to hell!"

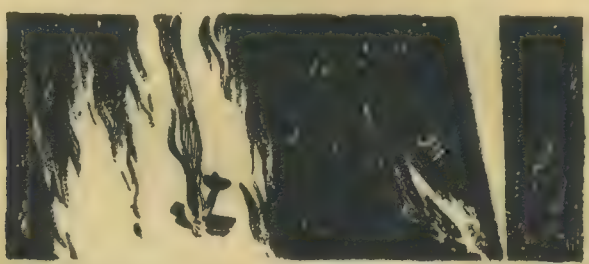
One to two. He dropped another. Halfway even now, the game.
Then a blast of bullets found him and one arm fell limp and lame.
With an oath akin to prayer he half rolled and pulled away,
But his foeman hung above him like a falcon on its prey!

Moore slipped out, though, split-S'd, caught him where one burst would turn the trick,
Raised his good hand to the Vickers, set his knees agrip the stick,
Crook'd a steady trigger finger and—the Vickers clicked, quit dead!
Then the German looped out firing and Moore's petrol tank flared red.

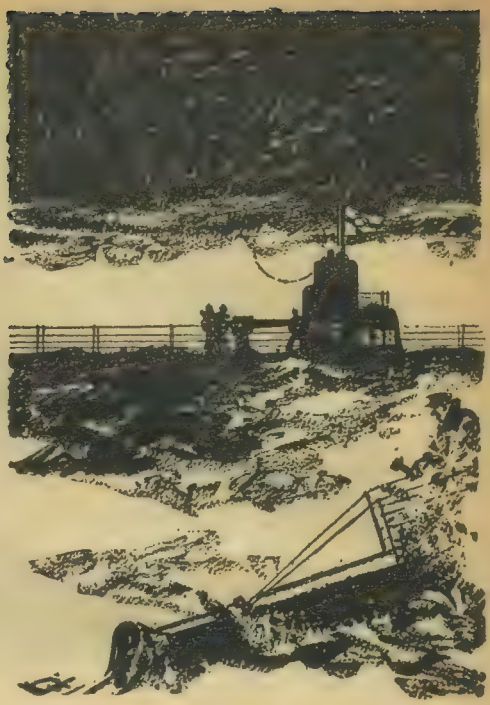
Moore turned loose his jammed machine gun, shoved the stick and shot through space,
Roaring down the road where ruin waited him with red embrace;
Scarlet streamers stretched behind him like a falling comet's tail,
Tongues of fire licked out and scorched him, but he held a sheer straight trail.

Death had seized the prize he'd fought for at his very fingertips,
But, by God!—a dark smile's shadow flickered on his graying lips—
He had snatched Death's own dread weapon for one blow before he died—
Like an arrow tipped with lightning he tore through the bomber's side!

Sheathing ripped and ribwork shattered as that savage shaft struck home
Gas cells flared; great crimson combers rose and fell in fiery foam.
One hell's breath, then glad oblivion, cool lipped as an ice maid's kiss:
Zeppelin and Bristol Fighter pinwheeled down Doom's black abyss!



Conclusion of a Two-Part Novel of Submarine Warfare



By COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG

WHEN there was no longer doubt that America would enter the war, Tom Knowles threw up his job in the Philadelphia shipyards and enlisted for destroyer service with just one thought in mind. And that was to meet Lieutenant Hans Erhardt of the German Imperial navy face to face and avenge his, Knowles', disgrace, and the tragedy of the United States submarine *C-3*, which had lain in the blue waters off Manila for two years, a rusting tomb for her crew . . .

Knowles had been Lieutenant Thomas Knowlton, U.S.N, commanding the *C-3*, in those days. And Erhardt had been interned in Manila harbor. Deliberately getting Knowlton drunk one night, the German had stolen the American's uniform and escaped back to the Fatherland on a Dutch steamer. And the *C-3*, without her commander, had foundered under the inexperienced handling of the young second-in-command. And in the meantime Erhardt earned the reputation of being the most ruthless of all Germany's U-boat commanders.

Knowlton, or Knowles as he called himself, was assigned to the destroyer *Walton*. And after weeks of fruitless patrolling, fate threw him across the path of the *U-38*, Erhardt's boat, in the long swells of the Atlantic out of Queenstown. But again the German triumphed; one of his torpedos found the *Walton*, and she limped back to port. Knowles, taking

PIGBOATS

charge of the shattered boat when her commander was killed, successfully brought her into Queenstown. He then transferred to submarines.

Again in a pigboat — the *L-20* — Quartermaster Knowles' training quickly made him the leader of the crew. The men told him that their commander, Lieutenant Rolfe, was not to be trusted in a crisis—was incompetent.

Off Helgoland the *L-20* ran afoul of enemy destroyers and, crippled by depth bombs, she plunged to the bottom—three hundred and fifty-one feet! Knowles knew it was suicidal to remain there under those tons of water, but Rolfe, nevertheless, ordered that they lie there until nightfall. Figuring they were doomed men anyway, the crew mutinied and elected Knowles their commander. Rolfe retired to his bunk, ashamed and beaten, to await his fate.

Sick at heart, Tom Knowles saw one attempt after another to raise the boat fail. And one by one the crew turned to their bunks, waiting for the end.

Alone in the control room, knee deep in water, Knowles heard a step behind him. Whirling about, he saw Rolfe facing him with a gun.

"I know you!" In a low voice, strangely contrasting with his snarling face, Rolfe spoke, his pistol steadied on Tom's heart. Quartermaster hell! You're Lieutenant Knowlton, skipper of the *C-3!*"

TOM started forward involuntarily, then settled back slowly as he sought to conceal his surprise.

"What do you think I was doing in that wardroom all the time you were trying to raise her? Do you think I'm a fool?" Rolfe's wild eyes lighted up fiercely. "Quartermasters on their first cruise on a submarine don't suddenly know all about 'em. I placed you. It wasn't easy; you've changed since I saw you at Annapolis ten years ago. And to make it harder, you're supposed to be dead!" The lieutenant laughed harshly, his eyes glittering. "Dead—along with the rest of 'em in the *C-3* at the bottom of the Yellow Sea!"

He leaned closer and waved his pistol exultantly over Tom.

"Dead in the *C-3*! That made it harder. Oh, we remember her in the submarine flotilla. You killed 'em all by your carelessness, you yellow cur!"

His hoarse voice cracked as he strove to keep it down; he clutched the nearest periscope a little more tightly to steady his wavering knees.

"You—" his eyes glared malignantly as he spat out the words—"you telling me how to run a sub, threatening me with a court if I didn't make a crazy attack! It's your fault we're sunk! And then you get the crew to mutiny, and I've got to stand by idle and choke in this poison air while you try to raise the boat!" His snarling lips curled away from his teeth; a maniacal look spread over his face.

"You didn't raise her, did you? Why didn't you raise the *C-3* and save their lives if you know so damned much? We'll all be stiffs here pretty damn quick. And nobody'll ever know what happened to us!"

Panting, Rolfe stopped a moment, his chest heaving, his body shaking from his outburst. But never for an instant did his pistol waver in its aim, and Lieutenant Thomas Knowlton, after three years a living person again, stared fascinated down the black throat of that .45, expecting each second the explosion that meant the end.

He looked again at Rolfe. Bewilderment and hate mingled in the face staring back at him, still struggling to reconcile the impossibility of Knowlton's being alive with his presence there.

"The *C-3* was crushed. The diver said so." Rolfe was talking to himself as he searched Knowlton's tense countenance again. "They were all killed. Nobody got out. And yet you're Knowlton and you're here." He paused, took a fresh grip on his pistol, then suddenly barked out, "How'd you escape?"

"You're making a big mistake, Captain," answered Tom slowly. "Put up your gun. I'm just Tom Knowles, chief quartermaster, and all I care about just now is saving this boat. We're up against it. There wasn't enough air, the pressure's too much for the pumps; we can't get up. If you've got any ideas, for God's sake let's try 'em out. Gun play won't get you or anybody else out of this hole."

"Quit trying to fool me. You're Lieutenant Knowlton!" Rolfe thrust the gun forward as if to punctuate his question, "How'd you escape?"

"You're off on the wrong foot, Captain," reiterated Tom, trying to speak quietly. "So far as I know, if Lieutenant Knowlton was in that boat, he's there yet. But why worry about him? Do something here if you can!"

"So you won't tell, eh? You're waiting for us all to die, then you'll get out the way you did on the *C-3* and leave us all here in this pig! You will, eh?" His voice rose shrilly as he slowly extended his pistol, hardly five feet away now. "Not this time! You'll die here with the rest of us, and you'll die first of all!"

The pistol steadied; Tom glimpsed a wild eye staring along the barrel at him, saw Rolfe's fingers closing on the butt. He was about to fire.

Imperceptibly Tom slid his right foot through the water, touched the switchboard, kicked out swiftly.

The circuit breaker tripped; sudden blackness engulfed the submarine. Tom dropped like a rock into the water, sliding frantically to leeward. As he fell, the explosion of the pistol rocked the silent

boat; a vivid streak of red flamed in the darkness. Another shot, then a third, both lower, as Rolfe fired into the water. Tom felt the bullets ricocheting past him as he brought up in the port bilges, groping to haul himself out of the water. Another roar, a crack as the bullet struck a bulkhead, flattened; a shrill whine as it ricocheted across the room, catching Tom in the left shoulder. As if struck by a club, he was knocked flat, splashing heavily down into the water.

Another reverberation echoed in the darkness and a bullet whistled over him, tearing through his jacket. That splash had betrayed his whereabouts; Rolfe was firing at the noise. Dazed by the blow which floored him, Tom sprawled on the deck an instant, then, choking from the water he had swallowed, struggled to drag himself above the surface. His clawing fingers closed on something; he gripped it tightly, half aware of what it was. A heavy Stillson wrench . . .

Again the pistol roared. Hot lead seared his leg.

Tom's arm drew back, he leaned forward in the darkness, waiting, tense. Another spurt of flame—and with the last of his strength Tom hurled the wrench, then slipped down helplessly and lay quiet in the darkness.

A moan, a clatter of steel on steel, a heavy splash in the water forward, then silence reigned again in the C.O.C.

CHAPTER IX

SIX HOURS TO LIVE

"GIMME a hand, Pete, an' we'll throw him back in the wardroom. If he'd had any sense, he'd 'a' stayed there in the first place."

Biff Wolters and Pete Mullaney hauled Rolfe's limp body up the passage, and stretched him out on the mess table. Randolph squeezed in after them, his slight form quivering noticeably as he bent over to examine the unconscious figure.

A huge lump, purple and green, swelled from Rolfe's forehead where the wrench had caught him, and blood oozed from a deep cut in his temple which had struck the forward bulkhead as he fell. The electrician leaned down and placed an ear to his breast. Wolters slumped on the bench, watching him, while Pete gazed anxiously. At last Randolph straightened up.

"He's gone, mates."

Pete crossed himself reverently and slipped out through the curtains.

"Well," muttered Biff, "I s'pose if he'd got Tom, he was goin' after the rest of us. That's what y'call a strong sense o' duty. It works even at the bottom o' the sea. He was bound to see Tom get shot just like the 'Regulations' says for mutineers in wartime."

The chief electrician rose with an effort.

"I suppose it's our funeral as well as his. He ain't beat us to it a lot. How much longer can we last?"

"About six hours yet, Tom says. That is, if we all went together," he added thoughtfully. "'Course, if some o' the boys pass out sooner, they'll quit usin' their share o' the air 'n' that leaves that much more for them that's left."

Randolph's breathing suddenly slowed, involuntarily economizing on his share of the oxygen. He slumped back on the bench, dropping his head on the table.

A puddle of water gathered on the table, slowly spread out until it wet his face. Randolph raised his head a trifle, then drew back, convulsively, as he found himself against Rolfe's dripping legs.

"Six hours more of this'll drive me nuts," he murmured, running his long fingers through his hair and gripping his head as if trying to hold it together while he struggled to think. "Six hours more! What good are they to anybody down here? Say, Biff," he asked suddenly, "are you married?"

"Naw, thank heaven," replied Biff. "I never marry 'em, Sparks. Just tattoo their name on my hide somewhere to show 'em I love 'em, 'n' everybody's happy. That's the best way for a sailor. Y'wanna

look 'em over?" He started to strip off his undershirt.

"Never mind, Biff; I've seen 'em before. Maybe you're right. But I'm married an' I got two kids." Randolph buried his head in his arms again. "Six hours to live, an' I can't even leave a message for the kids. They've never even seen the sea, Biff—just the mountains out near Denver. An' all my boys'll ever know about their dad is that the ocean's swallowed him up! An' my wife!"

His face softened and a smile lighted his thin features for an instant as a faraway vision floated before his eyes.

"Did you ever live in the mountains, Biff?"

"Mountains!" Biff looked at his companion in disgust. "What good's the mountains for a sailor? Gimme Coney Island with some Liz, or the Bund at Yokohama with them *geishas* strumming on guitars 'n' lookin' at ye with them big eyes sorta cut on a slant in their smilin' little faces. You don't catch me lookin' for no mountains to make a liberty when I'm ashore!"

Randolph hardly heard him. A rapt expression spread over his face; the pain of breathing seemed to ease.

"You'd forget all those dames, Biff, an' you wouldn't want no more of the sea, nor liberty ports, neither, if you'd ever lived in the mountains with a girl like mine an' roamed away by yourselves. Just watched the clouds scud over the peaks, an' seen the outlines of the Snowy Range lookin' close enough to touch—an' you just ramblin' round with your girl in those pine forests where there's nothin' but mountain brooks an' soft pine needles underfoot, an' you both drinkin' in the stars an' the blue sky an' the little fleecy clouds playin' tag with the mountain tops."

With a wistful look in his eyes, Randolph gazed out through the curtains as the memories of his highlands came back—but as he looked he came face to face with cold reality. His eyes fell on tilted periscopes, on the useless switchboard, cluttered with open switches and dead voltmeters. The gleam of rapture swiftly faded. His face grew gray, he started to sob.

"Mary, sweetheart, why can't you hear me!" He jumped up, glaring at his companion. "Biff, Biff! It ain't fair! Six hours to live an' not a word we say'll ever get home! Damn these pigs! Dyin' soldiers in the trenches have got it all over us! They can send messages to their wives an' kids! What's the use of living six hours. I don't want 'em. The rest of you can have my air! Mary, darling!"

Before the startled Biff even knew what he was about, Randolph seized the pistol from the table and sent a bullet crashing through his heart. He fell lifeless across the body of his captain.

Biff rose wearily. The curtains jerked apart and Knowles' ashen face peered through. He took in the tragedy at a glance.

"He was worryin' over his wife back in the mountains," explained Wolters slowly. "It oughta be agin the 'Regulations' for a sailor to get married 'n' have kids. They just don't jibe with goin' to sea."

The acrid tang of the powder smoke stung his nostrils. Reaching over, he lifted the pistol and extracted the clip from the handle, snapping back the slide to make sure no cartridge remained in the chamber.

"Here, Tom—" he tossed Knowles the empty Colt—"you take care o' this. If any more o' the boys feel the urge to shove off, let 'em get a bayonet. It's bad enough havin' to breathe what's left o' the air now, without seasonin' it with any more o' that damned powder!"

Together, they emerged into the control room. Biff vanished into the battery room.

Limping from a deep flesh wound in his thigh, white from loss of blood, Tom crawled through the forward door into the battery room after him, and dragged himself up the narrow starboard passage toward his own bunk. At least there was no water on the battery deck—yet. With Mullaney's assistance, Tom worked his way to his bunk. He crawled clumsily

into it, but the sharp flashes of pain shooting through his tortured body as the leg twisted awkwardly in his struggle to haul himself up caused him to collapse suddenly. He rolled down the sloping mattress till he brought up in a limp heap against the stanchions, and lay still.

CHAPTER X

THE DEATH WATCH

TOM KNOWLES stirred slightly; his nostrils distended convulsively, as, feebly, he opened his eyes. A new odor filled the room. He sniffed apprehensively, then rolled out of his bunk and dragged himself erect. He clung to the stanchions while he prodded the recumbent Mullaney with his wounded leg.

The blanket clad form on the deck stirred slightly, then lay still again. In alarm Tom drew back his foot and, in spite of the acute pain, kicked Mullaney with all his force. The pallid face on the deck moved uneasily, the eyelids slowly opened and Pete looked up, mildly surprised to see Tom erect again.

"Lemme alone, Tom. Shure it's as aisy restin' here as in me bunk." His blue eyes blinked and closed again.

"Pete, get up!"

Another kick, another stab of pain. Mullaney rose to a sitting posture, looking at Tom reproachfully.

But Knowles had no time to waste.

"Get up, Pete, for God's sake! It's chlorine! Look!" A greenish yellow gas like a heavy smoke was trickling from the exhaust vents in the storage battery space beneath the deck, thinning out and vanishing as it filtered into the room. "Sea water's hit that sulphuric acid from the batteries!"

Tom choked as he inhaled a stronger whiff of the gas.

"Quick, Pete!" Mullaney struggled weakly to his feet. "It'll generate fast now and kill us all in a few minutes."

Pete looked at him helplessly, too horror stricken to move.

"What kin we do?" he gasped.

"Get out of here! Close off the battery room," cried Tom. "Shake everybody up. Get 'em out of their bunks, back aft into the engine room or the control room. Quick! We'll have to seal off this compartment before the gas spreads any further. For God's sake, Pete, shake a leg!"

Mullaney staggered away.

Tom stumbled aft along the passage, thrusting his arm into each bunk as he went, gripping its occupant by the hair, jerking savagely as he yelled—

"Chlorine, get out!"

He heard Mullaney's shouts, the feeble curses of the sleepers, the dull pad of feet behind him as men tumbled out on the battery deck. He came to the bulkhead. The heavy steel door was swung forward into the battery room, latched back against the fore and aft partition which formed the captain's stateroom. Tom fumbled behind the door, feeling for the catch. He swayed unsteadily, squeezed hard against the partition as he sought to make room for the gasping sailors streaming out of the battery room. He found the catch and pulled out the pin. But due to the heavy port list, the door still lay to port, wide open.

Knowles turned and look forward. A greenish haze was filling the battery room. Coughing men groped by him, feeling blindly for the passage. Pete burst through the haze from the port side, falling against him. He stared a moment at Tom, his eyes watering, his lungs heaving convulsively as he finally took a breath.

"I shook 'em all, Tom." A choking pause. "All hands 'r' out—that's comin' out," he added with an effort. "For the love o' Mike, close the door!"

Tom seized the handle and tugged hard to swing the weight uphill. He started it, then stopped a moment while he listened intently, and his smarting eyes sought to penetrate the green fog masking the tiers of bunks. No noise, no movement. A new cloud of vapor poured from the vents, rolled aft along the deck toward him. He stepped back into the control room and

slammed the door shut, hurriedly jamming down the dogs.

"Shut off all the voice tubes and ventilation mains going through this bulkhead, Biff," yelled Tom as he hammered the dogs hard down on the wedges. "We mustn't let any gas leak through!"

He finished and leaned back, clinging to the door handle while he panted for breath. Behind him he heard the bang of closing clapper valves. Still leaning against the wardroom partition for support, he hobbled a little farther aft and came to the space abreast the manifolds. Sanders was screwing closed the voice tube valves; a few men—Mullaney, several others—were perched on valves here and there, knees drawn up under their chins to keep their feet out of the cold water. Tom looked inquiringly aft into the engine room. It was deserted. An icy fear numbed his heart.

"Where's the rest of the boys, Pete? Gone aft to the motor room?" he demanded.

Mullaney shook his head, looked mournfully forward at the dogged down door.

"Most of 'em were past wakin', Tom," he replied. "They was already stiffer'n boards when I shook 'em. There might 'a' been one or two waked up but didn't have no strength to crawl out. I dunno."

The quartermaster's eye ran over the little group. Only eight left including himself. And his courage sank as an anxious glance showed neither Wolters nor Arnold among them.

"Didn't Biff turn out, Pete?" he asked. "Surely he was still O.K.?"

"I yanked him, Tom, an' I thought I saw him followin' me, but he ain't here."

TOM sat down on the drainage manifold. Carefully he started to drag his feet up out of water. A stab of pain made him desist. His right leg would not bend. He leaned back instead, head against the forward diving wheel, feet dangling in the flood. Wearily his eyes rested on the clock.

Midnight.

A dull rap broke the quiet. Tom looked around. The others were perched as before. Not one had moved.

Another rap, then a muffled knocking echoed through the silent submarine. The startled sailors looked around the C.O.C, striving to locate it. A wild hope flared in their hearts. Divers? They looked eagerly at Tom. He shook his head. Not at that depth—and in enemy waters.

The knocking came again, weird, irregular. The petrified sailors shrank back in alarm. But suddenly the wounded quartermaster slid from his perch and hobbled forward—commenced madly to free the forward door.

"Some one's still alive in there! Lend a hand here!"

He heaved frantically to loosen the dogs he had sledged home.

A hand gripped him, stopped his hammering. Sanders was clinging to his arm.

"Don't do that, Chief!" he begged. "Leave her closed. They're done for in there anyhow. And if that gas gets into this room, an' we have to abandon the controls, it's goodnight everybody!"

"Lay off me! They get the same chance we do!"

Tom shook off his arm, and started beating loose the dogs.

"Pete, stand by here when I open it! You too, Sanders! Drag 'em through four bells! And quit breathing while you're at it!"

The last dog was loosened, turned back, clear of the door.

"Stand by, now!" Tom flung the door open, held his breath.

Mullaney dashed through into the yellow cloud beyond, stepped on something soft, hurled it through the opening, seized another body, dragged it back with him.

"S'all!" he shouted as he crossed the coaming.

Tom jerked the iron door closed, —twisted down the dogs, rammed them tight again—then turned to look. Biff Wolters lay gasping in the water at his feet, and Pete was carrying Bill Arnold's unconscious form aft.

Sanders lifted Biff's stocky frame erect, held him as his gassed lungs heaved, struggling to expel the chlorine laden air that he had breathed. With cracked lips, distended nostrils and watering eyes, Biff looked at them, smiled wanly at the chief quartermaster.

"I knew ye'd hear me, Tom." His head drooped. "Lemme lie down. I had to help Bill out—he couldn't walk." He took a deep breath, another and another. "Ain't the air fine!" His huge chest swelled out, inhaling it thankfully. "Lemme lie down a minute, I'm tired." He exhaled slowly, as if reluctant to part with the air. "Terrible time findin' Bill 'n' draggin' him down that passage. An' then to find the door was closed!" He breathed convulsively, leaning heavily on Tom's shoulder. "I wouldn't 'a' blamed ye, Tom, if ye hadn't opened it. My fault for not gettin' out when the word was passed. But I had to get Bill— That gas just burns your guts out. Lemme lie down, Tom."

The deck was covered with water. No place to stretch out except on the wardroom table alongside Rolfe's stiffening corpse. Tom shook his head. Where else, then? There was the range in the galley. That was above water—and unnecessary, now. Hardly able to hobble, he helped Biff aft, watched Sanders assist him up and saw him relax with a sigh of perfect content, his feet on the drainboard to the sink, his wracked body sprawled loosely over the cold burner disks of the galley range.

Biff rolled his swollen eyes and mumbled drowsily:

"You're a reg'lar shipmate, Tom. You go ashore with me when we git back 'n' I'll show ye how to make a liberty ye won't never forgit. Not even when ye got ten hash marks." He closed his eyes. "Don't bother with me, Tom. I jus' wanna breathe awhile."

He lay back, his parched lungs crying for air to wash them free of the irritating chlorine they had soaked up.

Quietly Tom left the galley, smiling grimly at Biff's conceit. Their next liberty! When they got back! Yes, *when* they got back . . .

Hanging to the Kingston valve levers, Knowles eased himself up the room and sat stiffly down on the valve wheels. With Sanders' assistance, he managed to get both his feet up and rested them on some copper pipes going to the air banks. With a sigh of relief, he propped his head again against the diving wheel and lay back, staring at the inner hull of the submarine, arching in a smooth circle a few feet above him, vanishing in the water at his feet.

THE sea had them tightly gripped; slowly it was seeping in, making them heavier. Soon it would rise high enough to short the switchboard, leave them in terrifying darkness. And then the few men left would gradually use up the little oxygen remaining, build up the carbon dioxide. In the darkness, in the cold, in the damp, the water would creep up on them; they would struggle frenziedly to the last, clutching at pipes, at conduits overhead, to keep their nostrils above that unseen tide, gasping for breath in the foul air; then one by one, like rats caught in a trap, their strength would fade, their nerveless fingers let go. Their torture would be over.

That damned clutch. Tom looked down to it. A little thing—but ambition, hope, life, were fading away between its slipping disks.

The minutes ticked slowly off. Another hour went by. The strained breathing of the few survivors, an occasional gasp, a sudden cough, mingled with the hissing of the water squirting in. Rigid muscles, braced against levers, valves, or stanchions, held their owners on strange resting places, clear of the slowly rising water. A vague odor of chlorine tinged the atmosphere, irritated their lungs, gave rise to fits of choking coughs. A little gas had filtered through the open door when they had rescued Wolters and Arnold.

With his brain swimming, Tom tried to think. They could not get the boat up.

All right. Any chance of getting out of her? He figured a little. The weight of the sea above them—how much was it? He calculated it roughly. There was a load of thirty tons pressing down on each little hatch, holding it closed. It didn't seem possible. Yes, that's right, thirty tons—the weight of a Pullman car sitting on each little exit hatch, holding it closed. The pressure over the whole hull must be tremendous. He estimated that painfully. About forty thousand tons. The sea had them, squeezing their frail shell with a grip of forty thousand tons. Why didn't it crush in like an eggshell? He glanced fearfully at the strained plates encircling him, the started rivets, the leaking joints. They were close enough to letting go.

Never mind that. How about getting a hatch open, getting out? But that thirty ton load on each one—foolish to try bucking it. The hatches were jammed down by the sea, their rubber gaskets flattened out, their bronze rims riding metal to metal on the hatch coamings, biting into them, straining to spread their huge load over a little more steel.

Still, there was the conning tower, double hatched, designed as an escape trunk. If he got into that, closed the lower hatch, flooded the trunk from the sea, the incoming water would squeeze the air in the tower into a little space at the top and balance the pressure inside with the sea pressure outside. That would take the load off the upper hatch, allow him to trip it, perhaps to float out of the conning tower as the bubble of air rushed out into the sea.

But then? At the bottom of the ocean, three hundred and fifty-one feet from the surface, with the sea pressure suddenly gripping his body, and a hundred and twenty yards of icy water for him to fight his way up through — what chance? Even if his ribs did not immediately crack, his chest cave in? Hopeless. But if by a miracle he got through that, then the surface. The deserted sea, no land near, no ships to pick him up. A few feeble strokes in the cold water, waves washing over him, spray driving into his nostrils, then the end. It was night up there—the long northern night. There would be not even a brief glimpse of the glory of the sun before the waves swallowed him up, and he sank again to rest at last in the ooze beside the stricken submarine.

No use. Whichever way his panicky thoughts turned, there was no escape. Trapped. Inexorably. Hopelessly. His brain fell in a torpor, mercifully easing the horror of facing what lay before.

His mind wandered away, subconsciously attempting to ease the strain of his immediate peril. He dozed over the past. Annapolis—his plebe summer. Ten-oared cutters moving awkwardly up the Severn. Blisters on his hands from that young tree they called an oar which he struggled with while the upper class coxswain sarcastically discussed his stroke. His youngster cruise. Berlin before the war. Those marvelous strawberries and cream in that inn high above the Bergen fiord, looking down on the deep blue water, mountains mirrored there, battleships swinging idly at anchor, far from the sea. Annapolis again. June week. Girls. Parades. The Farewell Ball. More girls with the moonlight shining over Chesapeake Bay.

He sighed at that, twisted uneasily on his manifold, shifted his wounded leg a trifle to ease the pain.

AND THEN the Fleet. Mercifully his mind skipped over the *C-3*, his years of wandering, of agony in the reeking tramps, the filthy forecastles, as he roamed the China Sea. Boston. The Charlesbank, Washington Street, Boston Common. His wild days as a riveter. Easy money, no responsibility, no future. Whisky. Girls. Plenty in Boston. And Quincy too. Hard work though, bucking up against that rivet gun. The old preliminary *tap-tap*, then the clatter of the flying die, the quick trimming with the chipping hammer, the hurried finishing off with the gun—all floated again through his ears.

Rivet after rivet, the endless rattle and bang of the guns against the red hot metal. Scaffolds, the gaunt ribs of the unfinished ship. Dirt, smoke, noise. You had to be good to be a riveter. And in hot weather or cold, you got those rivets down in the sweat of your brow and the sweat of your palms. Easy money. Not when you earned it. Only when you came to blow it along Washington Street. Those dollars were as slippery, as hard to hang to as a rivet gun after you'd driven up the first hundred rivets and your leather gloves were oozing sweat from your straining palms. Right.

Vaguely he recalled his last day in Quincy, dwelt a moment on his last rivet. The bucking gun had jerked from his slippery gloves, shot the die all the way across the deck. He had had to hustle to retrieve it, rub his gloves in the dirt and the rust to get a good grip on his gun, and get that rivet down before it cooled off. His last rivet. He sighed with satisfaction. He'd won; hammered it home in spite of that slip. A good job, too. Slippery or not, no rivet gun could get away from him, spoil his work . . .

Curiously, Tom's reverie broke, his unseeing eyes came back from far away. He shifted a little and looked down behind the maze of pipes and valves. Slowly his face lighted up; the hopeless resignation vanished. A queer idea took shape in his mind; he regarded the high pressure pump clutch below him with a new interest. Slippery, yes. Just like his old riveting gloves. And he'd licked that. Those clutch disks were inaccessible, they couldn't get bolts through them, you could hardly touch them—but they wouldn't slip again! But he'd keep quiet about his idea till he was ready. Carefully he slid from his seat and started aft.

Painfully Tom hobbled along, panting fiercely. Movement was difficult, breathing an effort. A terrible load seemed to press on his wavering knees as he struggled to walk. His heart pounded, his straining lungs inhaled and exhaled far above their normal rate, striving to extract enough oxygen to support his exertions.

The engine room . . . He wobbled through the little door, descended the three steps to the level of the engine gratings, clambered aft between the Diesels. He clung to cams, springs, throttles—anything to keep erect on that oily footing as he worked aft between the badly tilted engines.

The last bulkhead, another narrow door. He squeezed through. The motor room at last. Feverishly his eyes roamed over the motors, scanned the array of machines jammed in the little room. Yes, there above that lathe. An emery wheel.

He seized a hammer from the tool rack to starboard, jerked the emery wheel from its peg, slipped it over the horn of the anvil at the work bench. A rap of the hammer and the wheel broke into half a dozen fragments.

The sharp ring of steel on steel rang through the boat as, one by one, Tom beat the fragments of the wheel to dust, gathering the emery powder in a little heap on the bench beneath the anvil. He swept the mound at last into his coat pocket and staggered forward again through the engine room, clinging to the Diesels.

The noise of hammering had roused the crew. In a little knot his companions were massed in the control room, their haggard faces peering through the bulkhead door to the source of the racket. Pete, stronger than the others, was halfway down the engine room passage, haltingly struggling toward him.

"You all right, Tom?" he asked anxiously.

Tom nodded, dragging himself past another cylinder.

"For the love o' Mike, thin, what's the use o' hammerin'? Who's goin' to hear?"

Tom, husbanding his strength, ready to collapse after his exertions, did not answer, but motioned Pete to go ahead, to get out of his road. Exhausted, barely able to life one foot after the other, he reached the tiny open space forward of the

engines, and crawled rather than climbed the iron steps to the level of the control room deck.

SPECTRAL eyes followed him, gaunt faces tinged a yellowish green turned hopefully as the silent chief quartermaster struggled through the opening in bulkhead and made his way toward the diving station.

Biff Wolters edged in beside him; Sanders, Mullaney, two oilers, a gunner's mate and Cobb, the radio man, looked on eagerly as Tom seized the clutch lever.

"What you gonna do, Tom?" asked Biff in a faint whisper, the muscles in his throat swelling painfully as he struggled to make the words audible.

"I think I've got the answer this time, Biff. We'll make that liberty yet."

Tom threw back the lever, worked it in and out a few times to gage the clearance between disks and the point at which the clutch snapped home.

"Let's have the juice on this motor again," he ordered as he disengaged the clutch finally, wholly absorbed in his task.

No one moved.

"Shake it up, Sparks. We've got to hurry."

Tom gripped the lever, ready to shove it home; he looked impatiently round at the switchboard.

"Oh!" he gasped, suddenly remembering.

Randolph was in the wardroom with the skipper. Knowles looked anxiously over the little group behind him.

"I guess I know the board."

Cobb, the radio electrician, shuffled through the water, found the circuit, closed the switch.

A dull explosion, a vivid flash, and darkness. A strong smell of burning insulation filled the room. Feeble curses, a few groans, then Tom's voice cut sharply through the darkness—

"Yank that switch out, Cobb!"

A moment of fumbling in the darkness, then—

"She's open again."

"All right; throw in the circuit breaker now."

A brief delay followed while the radio man located the breaker; then a click and the lights flashed on. A sigh of relief went up—but not for long. A cloud of white smoke was rising from behind the switchboard, spreading slowly through the thick atmosphere; the stench of burning rubber became sickening.

Despairingly Cobb looked at the board.

"The water's got inside that cable, and the circuit to that pump's got a bad ground. She blew her fuses as well as the breaker."

Sanders looked at the curling smoke, then drew hopelessly away.

"I thought I could stand anything by now, but this rubber's too much. I'm through, boys."

He choked, staggered feebly forward, poked his head into the wardroom. The green baize curtains fluttered a moment as he clawed futilely over the cold bodies inside. A moment and he thrust his head out again, to look wildly aft.

"Say, Biff, where's that gun Randolph had?"

Wolters shook his head.

"I dunno. Mebbe he took it along with him."

Sanders glared at him, then vanished again into the wardroom. Biff looked significantly at Tom while the sounds of splashing echoed from the little wardroom. Sanders was pawing round, seeking the lost pistol.

But Tom hardly noticed him. This final blow had dazed him for the moment, left him with a sudden sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. With the possibility of making the pump work at last, the motor had gone dead on them. He stared down at the pump, at its driving motor. The water had not yet reached it. The ground could not be in the motor; it must be in the circuit itself, somewhere between the switchboard and the motor terminals. But in the mass of wiring behind the board and the thousands of wires running through the C.O.C. they could never trace that circuit, clear the

short. And, meanwhile, in the thick clouds of acrid smoke his eyes smarted, his overwrought lungs seemed lined with fire. Minutes were precious now.

"Cobb," Tom snapped, "quick, a new circuit! Get some wire!"

His eyes roved over the ceiling, searching. There was an armored cable leading into the galley. Hurriedly he traced it. Yes, it fed the galley range. They could spare that.

"Pete, Cobb, tear that out!"

A twist of a wrench and the circuit was torn loose from the range; a few more yanks, and thirty feet of wire was hanging free of its clips. Good! That circuit ran overhead from the board; it was bound to be free of shorts.

A blow of the hammer on the shorted cable where it ran down the side of the ship into the water, and the wire parted, leaving a severed end a foot long to the motor. Cobb's knife, his trained fingers, quickly skinned the terminal wires, spliced them to the substitute cable. He staggered through the smoke to the radio booth, leaned over Arnold, pulled a roll of tape from the table drawer. A few turns around the splices and the circuit was ready again. Feverishly Cobb plowed through the water to the switchboard. He looked back at Tom.

"Ready?" he inquired.

The little group of survivors looked at him anxiously through the haze.

From forward came curses, the splashing of water—the noise of Sanders searching under the wardroom table.

Tom looked at Cobb.

"Ready," he answered.

Cobb closed the switch.

A whir; the motor started up. The tension in the room relaxed a trifle—and Tom breathed again. At least they had the motor once more.

AGAIN he worked over the manifold while the motor whirred, setting the valves to the high pressure pump, suction from the bilges, discharge to the sea. He straightened up, panting, to feel Mullaney crowding in against him, the others in a little circle just behind, leaning on each other for support. He glanced hurriedly round. The fog rising from their breath as it struck the chill air, the gas, the smoke of the insulation—all made a thick murk through which he could barely make out the periscopes. Cobb, a shadowy figure beyond, clung to the switchboard, peering intently toward him. Tom called to him:

"Stand by to trip that switch again, Cobb, if she won't take the load."

"Aye, aye."

Knowles faced the pump, reached into his pocket, clutched a fistful of the emery dust. Slowly he pushed over the clutch lever till the disks were nearly engaged, flung a handful of powder down between them and jammed the clutch home.

The motor suddenly slowed as the load came on, then the grinding of the gears and the pounding of the pistons filled the room. Fascinated, the half suffocated sailors watched as the clutch leathers slipped round a little and the emery cut into the smooth disks. A few revolutions and the roughened leathers caught, the slipping ceased, the overloaded motor groaned as it spun round. Not daring to breathe, the men stared a moment longer, then turned. The ghost of a cheer rang out. In the center of the room, a strong vortex whirled in the pool of water on deck. The high pressure pump was at last forcing the water overboard!

Faces brightened, backs suddenly straightened up. The waterline in the room receded. The splashing in the wardroom stopped. Sanders, on his hands and knees, poked out his head, demanded—

"What's happenin' to this water?"

The noise of pumping struck him; he eyed the vortex, then sat suddenly down in the water and started to cry.

The pump groaned on. Biff leaned over the manifold, watching it fondly. The sharp note of the spinning motor echoed through the long silent boat; the surface of the water was covered by

myriad little ripples as the boat vibrated to the laboring pump; the gears whined, the pump rods pounded as they bucked the sea.

"Ain't that the sweetest music you ever heard?" Biff Wolters' cracked smile beamed on Tom, invited the others to take a closer look.

In twenty minutes the control room was dry; Tom switched the suction connections, and poured a little more emery into the clutch. There was no need—the slipping was over.

Another hour dragged by. The few survivors silently watched the sea vanish from the engine room, wondering whether they could hold out till the pump caught up with the leakage. One by one they dropped to the deck, eyes popping from their heads, tongues protruding, gasping for air. And all the while, Tom clung to the drainage manifold, feverishly watching the motor. It was heating up. The ammeter showed it was drawing a two hundred per cent. overload. The minutes ticked away, the water went out, the motor grew so hot he could not touch it; its windings started to smoke. Would it burn out?

"Nothin' we can do except hope," muttered Cobb, leaning weakly against the switchboard, eyes glued to the ammeter. "Lucky for us now it's cold down here; in an ordinary room she'd 'a' burned out long ago."

At last the pump gurgled, sucked air. The engine room was dry. Again the manifold valves were shifted, the pump started to draw from the motor room. A small compartment, that. A few minutes there sufficed. A brief pull through the bilge suctions to the sealed off battery room, then suction was put on the last compartment—the torpedo room forward.

No one stood any longer—no one could. On the slippery canvas, gripping the nearest object to keep from sliding down the heavily listed deck into the port bilges, the remnant of the crew lay sprawled helplessly, gasping like fish out of water. The pump pounded on; dying men listened to it with dulling ears. Would it never finish its task?

And then a strange thing happened. The port list gradually decreased, the tilted periscopes came upright again; little streams of water ran from the port bilges, spreading in thin sheets over the deck. The boat was righting herself, resting lightly on an even keel on the bottom as her negative buoyancy lessened.

But so imperceptibly did this movement take place that no one in the crew even noticed it till Biff Wolters, clinging to the binnacle, gradually relaxed his grip as the need to hold on vanished; and not till he started to take a fresh grip on the binnacle did he awaken to the fact that he was lying on a level deck.

"She's moved, Tom!" he murmured in a hoarse whisper. "She's getting light!"

But, except Tom, no one responded among the motionless forms lying round the deck.

KNOWLES dragged his weary body across the deck, pulled himself up on the manifold. His glazed eyes looked through the fog. Biff was right; the periscopes no longer leaned drunkenly to port. The sub could have only slight negative buoyancy left.

Again the pump gurgled, pounded irregularly. It was no longer getting anything forward. Tom struggled with the valve wheels for the last time, screwed the suction to the torpedo room, with a superhuman effort sprung open the connection to the adjusting tank, then fell limply over the manifold.

Unable to move, his eyes watched the water gradually dropping in the sight glass as the pump pulled on the adjusting tank. 1900 pounds—still half a ton negative. Slowly the waterline fell to 1500 pounds, then to 1000. They were approaching their normal condition for operation submerged.

The pump pounded steadily on. The *L-20* quivered slightly, her bow lifted a trifle. Tom's heart throbbed violently as

he felt the motion. They were tearing free!

With increasing speed, the bow started to rise. The limp forms on the deck slid aft, bumping the periscopes, the compass. The angle grew greater; tools, deck plates, men—everything portable rolled in a tangled heap.

Faster and faster the bow rose; the boat was almost vertical. With a jerk the stern broke from the mud, and at a steep angle the *L-20* hurtled upward. Swifter and swifter she rose, while Tom clung to the manifold. The rattle of falling tools rang through the boat. Then, in a cloud of spray, the bow plunged through the surface, lost buoyancy, and rapidly leveled off as the tapering stern of the submarine pivoted about her surging bow. The conning tower burst through the waves, the vessel see-sawed ponderously, first her bow showing, then her stern, and finally settled down to her awash condition with only the conning tower above water.

The violent uprush was over. The *L-20* rolled aimlessly in the trough of the sea, pitching irregularly as the waves swept by.

Inside the heaving vessel Tom Knowles let go his hold on a valve wheel and laboriously drew himself erect. He called out triumphantly—

"We're up, boys!"

But only a scarcely audible whisper left his lips, and in that mass of bodies piled aft in the control room, not one moved. Had they come up too late? Heartsick, Tom watched them a moment, then staggered toward the conning tower ladder.

Air—they must have air!

Slowly, painfully, he dragged himself up the ladder into the conning tower, leaned unsteadily against the binnacle as the submarine yawed violently beneath his feet. Overhead was the tripping lever for the hatch. As his legs tottered under him, he plunged forward, clutched wildly at the latch with both hands—and knocked it free. A dash of spray, mingled with a current of cold air, poured through the open hatch into the fog below.

THE WHIR of ventilating fans hummed through the *L-20*, drawing in streams of fresh air while the exhaust fans pushed out the bad. The mist in the control room was practically gone; only a trace of the biting chlorine was left; the odor of oil, of burned rubber, of dead air, was rapidly fading.

But even so, no living person moved inside the boat. The door to the battery room, sinister and silent, still was closed; the green baize curtains over the wardroom entrance, fluttering in the breeze of the fans, still masked the tragedy behind them; on the floor of the control room, a few bodies lay stretched out stiffly, bare feet, clenched hands, distorted faces, standing starkly out against the dripping blue of clinging uniforms.

But in the darkness of the chariot bridge, five figures huddled round the binnacle, clinging weakly to the railing, gulping the free air of heaven in huge drafts, faces turned to windward, eyes aloft, drunk with the glory of the stars, intoxicated by the wash of the waves burying their low hull, the sheets of salt spray driving into their wan faces.

Overhead glittered Orion, and the brightness of Sirius in the crisp night seemed to the men below as fair as the midday sun. The cold wind drove by, the *L-20* yawed and plunged aimlessly, the spent storm waves broke heavily over her forecastle, drenching her bridge. And still no movement from the men on the bridge; nothing but the sharp intake of hurriedly sucked air, the heaving of tired chests, the sibilant noise of men reveling in breathing.

An unusually large sea shook the conning tower. Knowles tore his gaze from the Pole star and looked at his companions, ranged in a pitiful group round the periscope shears—Wolters, Mullaney, Cobb, Arnold. Five men left of the crew of thirty. And the *L-20* with her storage batteries practically discharged, her air banks emptied, her torpedoes useless . . .

"I guess it's time to lay below and get under way, boys. We've had our spree

up here. This is damn close to Helgoland; if the enemy spots us in the daylight around here, we'll be out of luck. We can't dive, we can't fire our torpedoes, we haven't got enough of a crew to man the ship and fight our gun. And if we tried to surrender, we'd probably get sunk anyway. Fritz'd think it was some new frightfulness we were trying to pull on him."

"You're the skipper, Tom," answered Biff. His brawny chest bulged mightily as he gulped more air. "What you say goes. But I could stay out here all night, just leanin' back 'n' drinkin' in this air 'n' them stars."

Arnold's drooping shoulders shook; a coughing fit racked his lungs. His gray hair stood faintly out against the blackness, bobbing spasmodically as he strove to choke back his rasping cough. At last he quieted, a little blood oozing from his lips, his face ghastly even in the starlight.

"O.K, Tom," he labored out. "Whatever you want. Should I start the engines?"

"Yes, Bill. We've got to get away from here, quick. You man the switchboard, Cobb, and turn the Diesels over with the motors for Bill till he gets them started."

Cobb dropped down the hatch, followed by Arnold. Tom looked at his old friend, shivering in the chill wind.

"How're you feeling now, Pete?"

"For a man that's been dead onct, Tom, I'm feelin' fine. But how did ye ever bring me to?"

"Just a few pokes in the ribs, Pete, and the fresh air did the business. Then you started talking about Maggie before you even opened your eyes."

In a maze of unfamiliar valves, oil lines, mufflers and switches, the unskilled seamen struggled under Arnold's direction in the engine room to get oil to the Diesels, to open the muffler stops, to clutch in the propelling motors to act as starters for the main engines. Everything must be right; there was little juice left in the batteries; they could not afford to spin the huge engines uselessly.

Finally they were ready, took their stations. Arnold at the throttles, Wolters and Mullaney at the main motor clutches, Cobb at the controllers, and Tom at the steering wheel.

"Stand by!" called Tom, then nodded to Cobb.

Down went the controllers. A dull rumble aft; the motors whirled and amid the clatter of the valve gear, the silent Diesels started to turn over. A few uneven coughs, the floor plates rattled as the huge cylinders churned against compression, and both engines commenced their steady pounding. Tom heaved a sigh of relief.

Cobb released his controllers. Mullaney and Wolters hurriedly secured their clutches, and the *L-20* started ahead on her Diesels. The chief quartermaster, clinging to his wheel to support himself, headed the ship to starboard to get her out of the trough, and pointed southwest for Harwich, the nearest English port.

CHAPTER XI

COMMISSIONED

"THAT was a fine job, Quartermaster, and you needn't worry about being court-martialed for mutiny." The admiral smiled up at the chief quartermaster facing his desk, and continued briskly, "I've thoroughly investigated the troubles Lieutenant Rolfe had on the *L-18* before he joined your ship. You and your mates on the *L-20* will never be tried for saving your ship in spite of her captain, but the less said about that, the better. It's bad for morale."

The admiral rose abruptly, walked to the window, looked out a moment at the London traffic streaming by Whitehall; then his gaze wandered to the wall behind his desk, where hung a chart showing a steadily rising curve of Allied shipping losses.

"See here, Knowles, when you get back to Queenstown, tell your shipmates in the submarine and destroyer patrols

that they've got to hold back the U-boats till our new army is safely landed in France." He pointed grimly to the chart. "You see that curve? If that line of tonnage losses doesn't take a sharp dip downward, and soon, we're all sunk!" He placed his hand on Tom's shoulder, adding more quietly, "You've done a good job, Knowles. When you return to Queenstown, tell your shipmates what I've said. It's up to them."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Tom gravely.

The admiral offered his hand; the interview was evidently over. But Tom ignored the outstretched fingers. He looked anxiously at the gray bearded face, the drawn eyes. Would an enlisted man get a hearing? The admiral dropped his hand and glanced at his visitor in surprise.

Tom hastily pulled his thoughts together and burst out eagerly:

"Admiral, while we were stuck in the mud off Helgoland, we did lots of thinking; it was a fine place for that, anyway. And I thought of a new way of fighting U-boats."

He watched the admiral's face closely, but his heart sank when he nodded perfunctorily, let his eyes wander back to the desk covered with urgent papers. Tom was ignorant that each mail from America brought to the commander-in-chief hundreds of such suggestions, that a special board in Washington did nothing but consider the thousands of solutions to the U-boat menace which flooded in from all over the country. And the U-boat menace was still unsolved.

The admiral brought his eyes back, faced him again, courteous, seemingly attentive.

"All right, Quartermaster. Briefly, now, what's your scheme?"

"Submarines are our best weapons against U-boats. They're the only enemy the U-boat can't see first." The admiral pricked up his ears, looked sharply at the chief petty officer before him. Sound strategy that, at any rate. Tom continued hurriedly, lest the interview be suddenly terminated by some interruption. "A sub can use the U-boat's strongest weapon—make an unseen attack upon its unsuspecting victim. And on a U-boat, one hit is fatal."

"I agree with you, Knowles, but unfortunately we have only a few dozen submarines, and they're all slower than hell, especially submerged. Now if all our thousands of speedy patrol boats never see a U-boat more than once a month, what chance will twenty or thirty slow subs have of catching up with them?"

"That's the point, Admiral," burst out Tom earnestly. "Fix it so our subs won't have to catch up with them; make the U-boats come to us. Remember the Trojan horse? When the Greeks couldn't lick the Trojans, they fooled them. Give me an old tramp for a decoy, let her tow me submerged in the war zone, and the first sub that attacks her will be my meat. He'll never know what hit him!"

A grim smile spread over the admiral's face; the wrinkles on his high forehead gradually smoothed out as the idea sank home.

"So you'll carry on where the mystery ship left off; you'll be able to go through with your attack even if the U-boat never rises. Good! You know about Captain Campbell and his mystery ships?"

Tom nodded.

"Yes, sir, he did fine till the U-boats quit rising as targets for his masked guns after they'd torpedoed him. Now we've got to go him one better, and get the U-boat even if it doesn't rise. And after we've got a few of their boats and the Germans begin to wonder what's happening, why they don't come home, that'll put the fear of God into the rest of 'em."

"A very worthwhile plan, Quartermaster. You say you thought of it while trapped on the bottom, eh? It's certainly remarkable how a good quiet spot helps meditation." He glanced at his desk. "If I could only get away from all these papers, cables, conferences, and interruptions, to some quiet spot and think myself! Too bad the Thames isn't

deeper—I'd order a sub sent up here and go down in her whenever a little high powered thinking was necessary." He held out his hand again. "Congratulations, Knowles. We'll try that at once. And I'll swear that at the worst, it'll give us the added punch to hold the U-boats back till our northern mine barrage blocks off that North Sea exit." He clapped Tom warmly on the back. "I'll send word to Queenstown right away to fit out the necessary ships."

He walked rapidly back and forth, planning the details.

Emboldened by the admiral's enthusiasm Tom played his last card.

"Give me a tramp, Admiral, and the *L-20*, and let me try it out for you."

The admiral paused and looked curiously at the eager chief quartermaster facing him. Certainly he was an unusual seaman. And it was his own idea. No one would be more likely to put his heart into carrying it through. But he was only an enlisted man, after all. What would he do in command of a submarine?

"What do you know about handling a sub, Knowles?"

"Enough to get the *L-20* up, Admiral, and get her back with hardly any crew at all. And I know her from duct keel to conning tower. Give me a good crew, the boys of the *L-18*, for instance, and I'll show you!"

The Commander-in-chief thought rapidly. The idea of making a chief petty officer skipper of a sub seemed ridiculous. Especially in the American Navy with its sharp line between officers and men. But it was the men from the ranks who finally commanded Napoleon's armies. And, besides, if it had not been for this man, there would be no *L-20* back in port to assign to any officer, however able. He made up his mind.

"You're right, Knowles. I'll give you the boat!" he exclaimed. "And we'll see what the Huns think of this stunt." He looked at Tom a moment, then added, "I guess I'll have to make an officer out of you, young man." He sat down, wrote rapidly on the pad before him, tore off a sheet and handed it to the chief quartermaster. "Take this to Commander Barber, personnel officer, on the first floor. He'll make you out a commission as a lieutenant in the Naval Reserve."

Tom flushed happily. An officer again! Even if only in the Reserve. Till the war ended, that commission was as good as anybody's.

He took the note.

"Thank you, Admiral. I'll do my damnedest to carry this thing through!"

Leaning heavily on his cane, he saluted awkwardly, touching the admiral's note lightly to the vizor of his C.P.O. cap. An amusing conceit struck him and he smiled faintly. The admiral's note would be a magic wand, changing by its touch the brass fouled anchor and the leather strap of his C.P.O. cap into the brilliant gold shield and gold lace of that of an officer. And with those, he would have an independent command, a commission to roam the seas looking for enemy submarines—and the *U-38*.

"HOIST away!"

The winch creaked and a cloud of steam exhausted in puffs over the side. The men on the barge alongside leaped clear; the slings lifted from the deck, swayed gently, and then rose steadily up the rusty side of the *Galway*. The planks in the slings gave a little, readjusted the load to a circular section as the slings tautened, then teetered to the pull of the steadying lines as they went up the side.

The planks cleared the rail. A shrill blast on the boatswain's pipe, the winchman shifted his levers, and the boom swung rapidly in over the deck till the slings hung poised over an open cargo hatch.

The boatswain looked down.

"Stand clear below!"

Another blast of the pipe, the winch drum slacked away, the load of planks shot down through the hatch into the dark hold.

From the bridge of the *Galway* Tom Knowles watched absorbedly as load

after load of timber was whipped aloft from the scows alongside and stowed in the fore hold. Planks, pit props, old timbers—an odd assortment of lumber to be loading in Queenstown.

"You'll have to be careful how you stow that stuff, Erickson; your life is going to depend on it before long."

Lieutenant Erickson nodded. A rough seaman, clad in a baggy civilian suit; only a nondescript cap without any insignia bore the slightest relation to a seaman's uniform. A short stubby pipe was clenched between his teeth and he puffed vigorously at it while he watched the loading.

Lieutenant Knowles scanned him carefully.

"As a merchant skipper, you're perfect, old man. Your own roommate wouldn't know you'd ever sailed in anything but tramps."

Captain Erickson smiled.

"Yer ruddy well right, matey," he mimicked, then resumed his natural tone. "When the war's over, I'm going to get me an actor's job. No more sailoring for me . . . Well, what do you think of the cast? I've been rehearsing them a week now and they're only waiting for the curtain to rise to start the show. There's my leading man, answering his cue now."

A tough looking bruiser emerged from the forecastle and swaggered aft. An old derby hat—"a bowler, 'e calls it," explained the skipper—crowned his head; a striped blue and yellow blazer protruded from beneath a brown coat, which was held together with only one button, while his wrists stuck awkwardly out beyond the frayed sleeves; the cuffs on his gray trousers flapped above a pair of brilliant tan shoes. He puffed occasionally on a cigaret, then tossed it overboard and spat carelessly on the deck.

"That's Mr. Mate. What do you think of his makeup?"

Tom's thoughts drifted back to the bucko mates he had known in his own experience before the mast; they had nothing on this boy. He grinned approvingly.

"He's got it down pat, all right. What is he, anyway?"

"The chief boatswain off the battleship *Texas*. We're about to present the latest thriller, 'S.S. *Galway*, Bound In For Cardiff,' with an all star cast, obtained at vast expense, and regardless of the howls of their former skippers. Whenever I saw a type I needed, he joined the company. That order the admiral sent down quashed all the protesting execs, and here they are. When that lumber's all stowed, we'll sail whenever you're ready."

"Be sure you get it stowed in tightly, Captain. When you're torpedoed, that buoyancy is all that'll be left to get you back to port."

"Don't worry. I've got the carpenter off the *Melville* in the hold, personally supervising the job. There'll be damn little room left for water to get into the cargo holds and that lumber's going to be packed in right up to the deck beams to help our buoyancy in case we take a bad trim. We won't sink."

"I hope not for lots of reasons," replied Tom. "If I lost the *Galway*, especially without getting the U-boat, I might have trouble getting another tramp for a decoy. Shipping's getting too scarce to waste now."

"Well, if anybody's got more interest in seeing this bucket stay afloat than her crew, I'd like to know who. It's bad enough to go round begging to be torpedoed, without having to swim for it afterwards." Erickson bit viciously into his pipe stem. "Say, I wish I could smoke a cigar instead of this blooming pipe."

"No hope, Skipper. Not a chance. Where would the master of a tramp be smoking cigars? If a sub looks the *Galway* over through her periscope and sights the master smoking a cigar, she'll smell a rat immediately. You might as well get used to it; its one of the props that go with the part.

"And another thing," Tom went on. "This is the last time anybody in uniform's coming aboard, Captain. When I leave, you and your crew want to forget all about the Navy; you're a tramp

steamer; you'll go in and out of port by yourself and never in company with my sub. You've got to fool the pilots that bring you in and out; that'll not be so hard if you use the merchant service language while you're at sea—no 'aye, ayes,' no salutes, no ceremonies.

"And your crew have got to keep their mouths shut when they're ashore. They're just the deck force on a tramp, don't know anything about the Navy, never saw a sub and never want to, and they hate the hell out of these Naval lads going around in sailor suits, calling themselves seamen, and monopolizing all the girls. Secrecy—everything depends on that, and you know how secret this'll be from the Germans if the word once gets round Queenstown about what the *Galway's* really doing."

"I'm with you on that, Lieutenant," agreed the *Galway's* master. "I had that in mind in choosing the crew. They're all old hands in the Service; they know enough to be clams about that even when they're drunk. You can stow any doubts about them."

"I certainly hope you chose the right ones then; it's remarkable what whisky and women'll do to an unsuspecting sailor's tongue. Well, let's go below to the ward—" he caught himself hastily—"to the saloon and see that we've got our signal arrangements and our maneuvers laid out right."

CHAPTER XII

FIRST BLOOD

IN THE DIM light before dawn, the *L-20*, only her conning tower showing, lay awash a few hundred yards astern of the *Galway*, watching the eastbound convoy sweep by. As far as the eye could see, the ocean to the northward seemed to be covered with ships—vast shapes looming out of the semi-darkness—a forest of masts and stacks, moving resistlessly onward. Foam curled here and there as the waves broke against plunging bows; the gray water turned white as churning propellers cut the wide seas into one vast mass of foaming wakes. And over all, masking the stars, hung a low cloud of smoke, fed by countless smokestacks.

No lights showed, no whistles blew; silently, inconspicuously, the vast armada steamed on through the night toward France.

Tom watched, awe stricken; what could not a U-boat do, falling on that fleet like a wolf on a flock of sheep! The *L-20* heaved under his feet as he watched them pass, easy targets for his torpedoes. It struck him suddenly as queer—not that so many ships were being sunk, but that the losses were so few. Here he was, right on the flank of the convoy, ideal to attack. That two-stacker there, she was nearest; one torpedo on her, then turn a little to port and next fire at those two tramps astern of her and a little inboard—it was like taking candy from a baby. His fourth torpedo on that freighter following in the wake of the two-stacker, and then while Biff reloaded the tubes steam ahead a little . . .

A distant hum came to his ears, vaguely familiar. Tom looked aft in the darkness, abruptly alert. The noise swelled in pitch. The blowers on a destroyer!

On his starboard quarter a searchlight flashed on; a huge finger of blue light wavered a moment over the sea, then settled on his conning tower. Almost at the same instant came a flash of red fire in the darkness. A tracer shell shrieked toward him, a trail of sparks marking its path. The shell bounced on a crest just short of the *L-20* and burst in a geyser of flame and spray. A shower of splinters rattled against the sides of the conning tower.

Half blinded in the glare of the searchlight, Tom saw signal lights flashing on the *Galway:* no time to depend on that. He seized two Very pistols from the signal rack and fired wildly aloft. Another shell screamed by. Over, this time, thank heaven! Green, red, green, green—the stars from the Very pistols flamed in graceful arcs through the night in the Allied recognition signal.

With his heart in his mouth Tom glimpsed a dim bow come hurtling toward him out of the night. Firing had ceased; they were too close to fire; evidently they meant to ram. Hadn't he got his recognition signal right?

He pressed a button; below him Klaxons shrieked a warning through the boat; he yelled down the voice tube:

"Close all watertight doors! Blow all ballast tanks! Stand by for collision!"

He looked up from the tube. Heeled far down, port rail awash, helm hard over, propellers churning full astern, spinning almost on her tail, the destroyer was shooting by his starboard bow, not twenty yards away. In the gleam on her decks, reflected from her searchlight, he saw the shining muzzles of three four-inch guns trained on him, gunpointers crouched low over telescope sights, loaders standing tensely by, ready to hurl in the next shell when the breech should open. More faintly he caught a glimpse of two strings of ashcans on her stern, ready to rain overboard should he submerge.

The destroyer's bridge swept by; pale faces leaned out toward him, a voice roared—

"What ship is that?"

"U.S.S. *L-20*," shrieked Tom. "Keep clear!"

"Signal faster next time, old man! All subs look alike to us!"

A wave of a megaphone and the destroyer slid by and vanished in the night.

Tom leaned a little weakly against the binnacle for support. The bridge teetered uncertainly; he looked over the rail. The *L-20's* deck was just thrusting its narrow length up from the waves; they were coming into surface condition, the ballast tanks must be nearly emptied.

The helmsman looked at him. In the dim glow of the binnacle light his face seemed ghastly white.

"I probably look like that to him, too," muttered Tom to himself.

He looked down the hatch into the control and saw a few anxious faces below peering up at him.

"Below there, open all the doors and pass the word to secure in surface trim! The excitement's all over now. The U. S.S. *Lamson* has just gone by."

THE *L-20* rode more steadily now. Tom looked to port; the rear ships of the convoy were just steaming clear, leaving only the foaming sea to mark their passage. He took a long look at the disappearing ships and shook his head. Possibly a convoy was not attacked with such impunity after all. He surmised that a U-boat crew, normally anxious to see Germany again, would prefer to confine their attentions to ships unshepherded by destroyers.

Lights were flashing from the *Galway*. Evidently Erickson was anxious as to their fate. Tom trained his blinker tube on the *Galway's* bridge and, himself, answered in dots and dashes of flickering light, "No damage. Will pick up tow as usual."

With engines stopped, the *Galway* rolled silently in the trough of the seas, waiting for the convoy to open out a sufficient interval, while astern of her the *L-20's* air compressors pounded, hurriedly trying to make good in the banks the high pressure air used for the emergency blow on the ballast tanks; and the port Diesel, running light, was clutched in on its motor, which with connections reversed, was being driven as a generator to provide current for the air compressors and avoid any drag on the storage batteries.

An hour went by, a faint light streaked the eastern horizon. The *L-20* secured her compressors, coupled both engines to drive through to the propellers, and puffed slowly ahead under the *Galway's* counter and a little to windward. Mr. Mate and a few of his roughly clad seamen peered over the high poop.

"Look out below!"

A heaving line whistled through the air; the monkey's fist hit their deck and bounced across the low rail. Biff Wolters pounced on the line, dragged it forward, straddled the sharp bow of the subma-

rine and, leaning far over the stem, bent the line into the towing shackle. A green sea washed over the low bow, burying Biff completely; he clung to the bullnose, emerged a moment later blowing like a porpoise and took a final half hitch of the monkey's fist round its own part of the heaving line. He waved his arm, scrambled back, clinging to the jaws of the net cutter till he was safely aft where he could seize the rail for support.

From below, the *L-20's* winch slacked out and the towline dipped in a wide arc toward the *Galway* as the seamen there heaved in and the submarine paid out on the heavy wire hawser. On the freighter the heaving line was dipped low under the counter, hauled aboard through a specially fitted submerged hawse pipe, making the towline wholly invisible; while the telephone wire, cut loose from the towline just outboard of the point where the latter ran into the hawsepipe, was brought in over the *Galway's* rail, hanging in a loose bight and looking to the casual eye like nothing more than a Dutch pennant trailing under the counter.

Meanwhile the submarine, drifting with the wind, was well to leeward by the time the *Galway's* mate had shackled up inboard of his hawsepipe. A strain came on the towline; it rose like a bowstring above the waves, dripping full length. The submarine stopped drifting.

Over the *Galway's* poop Mr. Mate's bowler swung several times; all secured on the tramp.

"O.K, Biff; plug in the telephone."

Biff waved his hand and seized the L-*20*'s end of the telephone wire. He dragged it to a connection box alongside the gun pedestal, plugged it in, screwed down hard on the packing nut to make sure the joint was watertight, then called out:

"All set here. Test out below."

Inside the control room, Cobb slipped the special fire control telephone headset over his ears, pressed the button on his transmitter.

"Hello, hello, *Galway!* Can you hear me?"

"Hello, pigboat, hello. Yes, I get you fine."

Cobb reported the telephone line working.

Lieutenant Knowles glanced around. Streamers of fire were beginning to shoot across the heavens, gilding the low lying clouds ahead. The night was fast vanishing. It was time to disappear.

He pressed the warning signal; the Klaxons sang out raucously. Biff and his mates scrambled up the rear of the conning tower to the bridge and hurriedly dropped through the hatch.

Tom leaned over the voice tube.

"Flood the main ballasts."

The quartermaster pushed by him, going below. A dull roaring came from beneath the decks as the air whistled out the vents; the sea rose swiftly up the rounding sides, covered the freeing ports in the superstructure, flooded in over the deck. The boat lurched a little as her stability suddenly decreased with the disappearance of most of her waterplane. Tom took a last long look at the stars fast fading before the dawn, then dropped hurriedly through the conning tower hatch and slammed the lid down behind him.

FROM all sides reports came to him; a few brief orders and the *L-20* was submerged to thirty feet, vents closed, periscope just showing, and ready for any contingency.

Tom took station at the No. 2 periscope and adjusted the telephone headset over his ears. He pushed in the connection.

"Hello, Erickson!"

A loud voice buzzed in his ears—

"*Galway*, Erickson speaking!"

"All set on the *L-20*. Get underway immediately."

"Right away, Mr. Knowles."

Over the wire Tom heard the clang of the gong on the *Galway* and braced himself instinctively. Probably the steamer

started as gently as she could, nevertheless the submarine jumped ahead viciously as the first strain tautened the line, then surged back and forth jerkily several times before the *Galway* and her submerged tow both synchronized and moved forward with reasonable steadiness.

The hours dragged slowly along. Far down beyond the horizon, only a thick haze of smoke marking their position, was the convoy, a destroyer zigzagging on each flank, chaperoning the armada; the *Galway*, alone in the middle of a heaving waste of tumbling water and flying spray, was throwing up a vast column of black smoke, a pillar visible for miles around, apparently forcing her boilers to the limit to regain her position under the protecting guns of the destroyers. A few men were visible about her decks; on her forecastle, Mr. Mate, the carpenter, and a few seamen were struggling with the windlass, and having difficulty in freeing up the wildcats for service when they should soon need them for anchoring in port. On the poop another seaman was ostentatiously oiling the breech of the six-pounder, as small a weapon as any merchantman was now armed with.

From the galley in the waist of the ship the cook emerged, bearing a huge pail of slop. He walked to the side and, in utter disregard of the strict convoy rule against throwing anything overboard that would leave a trail, he lifted the bucket and emptied its contents down the rusty side. The scraps of the crew's breakfast — eggshells, coffee grounds, soggy bread—floated aft, a brown patch against the gray sea, soon marked astern by a flock of gulls circling over it with shrill cries, flashing downward to seize a morsel, rising again with flapping wings while they gulped their prizes .

A cold wind whistled by. The master, comfortably ensconced in his pilot house, listened to it. He looked anxiously aft to see how his dummy stack was standing up in the breeze. It was only a canvas covered cylinder. The stack was holding, however; the manila guys staying it looked as staunch and steady as if it were steel and they were really wire. Erickson turned away, relieved.

His roving eye caught a disturbance in the water on the port bow, perhaps a mile off. He paused, whipped up his glasses and looked again.

Yes—it was coming! A black mass boiled up through the waves; a hatch flew back; half a dozen men popped out on the dripping hull. Clouds of smoke billowed out along her stern; she was heading to cut him off. He saw the muzzle of a gun elevate, flash. A shell screamed by his bow.

Erickson picked up the telephone.

"Hello, *L-20*."

"Knowles speaking."

"Stand by for the show. A U-boat's firing at us off our port bow! I'll keep you posted." He released his button.

Tom's heart pounded. At last! He looked in his periscope. The eye piece was just above the surface. No use to take chances; he lowered the periscope a yard.

In a voice which he tried to keep low, but which, all the same, throbbed with excitement, he called out:

"Stand by, boys! A U-boat's shelling the *Galway!*"

The effect was electric. All over the room men straightened up, gripped their controls, gazed eagerly toward him. Discomfort, jolting, the maddening roar of the wake beating their sides—all were instantly forgotten.

The enemy was in sight!

On the *Galway* excited men scurried everywhere. Mr. Mate and his assistants forgot the frozen wildcat, ran to the side, took one look to port and vanished hastily from the forecastle. Seamen rushed aft, joining the solitary man at the gun on the poop.

Another shell whistled down on the *Galway*, crashed through the plating of the forehold and burst inside with a muffled roar. The battened down hatch cover swelled up like a balloon, ripping wide apart. Smoke started to curl up through the cargo hatch, to envelop the bridge.

Erickson watched with a wry face. Not so good. He crouched behind the bulkhead and spoke into his phone:

"Sub, there! We're turning to starboard. Watch yourself!" Then, to his own helmsman,

"Hard aport!"

ON HIS POOP the six-pounder, hastily cast loose and provided, was swinging in a wide arc as the ship turned, with Mr. Mate's bowler hanging over it conspicuously as he sought to steady the sights on his target. The six-pounder flashed; a shell shrieked down their wake and burst nearly a quarter of a mile wide of the U-boat racing up on their port quarter. Erickson laughed. Mr. Mate, as a heavy gun pointer, had for two years running been the main reason for the *Texas*' winning the Gunnery Trophy!

They were straightening away now. The mate looked aft over his rail. Vaguely through the clearer water inside their wake he could make out the outline of the *L-20* close astern, heeled considerably as it dragged around, following their turn on a smaller radius.

The six-pounder gun crew strove frantically to reload, but apparently a panic had them. The shellman dropped his charge; it bounced once on the deck and fell overboard.

A shell from the U-boat screamed across their poop, dropped into the water on their starboard side and burst close aboard. From their pursuer's bridge it must look like a hit.

Erickson decided to wait no longer. Crouching low, he leaped for a hidden valve lever under his chartboard and jerked it open. Instantly a cloud of steam, released from hidden pipes, poured up around the smokestack. The engines stopped and the *Galway* came slowly to rest, her power gone. To the U-boat's gun crew, it was plain that they had landed a shell in her boilers. They ceased firing.

The panic on the *Galway* was now complete. The crew of the six-pounder abandoned their gun and fled disgracefully for the boats, leaving Mr. Mate shaking his fists at them and unsuccessfully endeavoring to load the gun again himself. Finally he gave up and with a last shake of his fist at the distant U-boat, climbed down the poop and disappeared, leaving the abandoned gun pointing uselessly toward the sky.

On the midship island superstructure a knot of seamen were struggling to lower the boats, not wholly in pantomime, for the U-boat might reopen fire at any second.

On the bridge Erickson dropped to the deck, tossed his cap to the navigator,who, after donning it and peering wildly over the port bridge rail to make sure his identity registered, hastily rushed down the ladder to the superstructure, followed by the helmsman, leaving the ship drifting helplessly but still with a little headway on.

Crouched on the deck, invisible behind the bridge railing, Erickson watched anxiously through a slit. The sub was closer now—he could read her number, the *U-19*. In despair he watched her gun crew disappear below, her decks settle. Would she disappear, satisfied she had finished them? No, she was only going awash.

With nothing but her conning tower showing, a very poor target for gunfire, the *U-19* steamed slowly past his port side, over a thousand yards off, with her skipper watching the *Galway* carefully through his glasses. He was well versed in mystery ship tactics. The *U-19* was taking no chances.

Erickson glanced aft. Stokers were pouring up from his hold, joining in the confusion round the boats. That scene was going beautifully; the men had been well rehearsed, and certainly their acting could stand anybody's scrutiny.

The first boat landed in the water with a splash and started to pull forward. The second boat was swung out of its chocks, pushed outboard, lowered even with the rail. It started to fill rapidly with excited men.

Erickson crawled to a special voice tube.

"Ready aft, Mr. Mate?"

Mr. Mate, crouching in the poop, two decks down, alongside a pelican hook threaded through the towing shackle, gripped his sledge firmly as he growled out:

"All set, Captain. Whenever you give the word!"

Erickson lifted his transmitter and closed the contacts. Knowles answered instantly.

"Stand by, Knowles. I'll let you go in a minute now. The sub's the *U-19*. She's awash, headed down our port side, half a mile off. I think we got him fooled, but he's gun shy and he's not showing his hull. Afraid we've got some masked guns waiting for him, maybe. He's heading for our bow now, still awash. He'll probably break surface and commence shelling us again as soon as he gets well forward on our bow, so if we turn out to be a mystery ship, our guns won't bear on him."

Erickson ceased speaking and looked out again through the slit.

The U-boat, well forward of his beam now, had changed course slightly and was heading for a point off his bow. His second boat was halfway down the side, lowering clumsily. The falls slipped; it dropped the last four feet and hit the water with a tremendous smack. Erickson smiled contentedly; his part had gone off perfectly. Now for the *L-20's*.

He picked up his phone and pressed the button for the last time.

"Hello, Knowles? Yes, he's now on our port bow, still awash. Are you ready? Good luck, old man!" He leaned over the voice tube and called out fiercely, into both voice tube and transmitter, "Let go!"

Mr. Mate's sledge swung on the pelican hook; it flew apart, the shackle surged down the hawse pipe, vanished. Swiftly then he yanked out the jack on the *L-20's* end of the telephone cable, watched it jerk aloft and disappear over the rail. With a sigh of satisfaction Mr. Mate then crawled to the side and peered out an oval hole cut just above the deck, painted outside to look like a scupper. There was his bowler, adorning the head of the coxswain of the first boat; he caught a glimpse of the captain's gold braided cap perched rakishly on the man steering the other boat. The "captain's" violent profanity, as he cursed luridly the awkward landlubbers who were continually catching crabs as they struggled away from the side of the deserted ship, could certainly be easily heard on the bridge of the *U-19*, a quarter of a mile away.

Mr. Mate hitched his legs farther aft along the deck, sprawled out low and, squinting as far forward as he could, tried to get a better view of the sea on his port bow.

"This is sure fierce," he grunted, "after me waitin' more'n a week for the curtain to go up. I'll have to get me a better seat'n this for the next show."

TOM HEARD a loud click in his ears as the telephone connection parted. He tossed aside the useless headset.

"Watch your depth now, we're free," he breathed fiercely over his left shoulder to the men at the diving wheels; then, turning to Ingram, ordered sharply, "One-third astern, both motors!" Leaning over the voice tube he shouted, "All clear forward! Heave in that towline!"

An unnatural quiet pervaded the boat. The roar from the churning propeller of the *Galway* was gone; to the deafened ears of the *L-20's* crew, the boat seemed silent as a tomb.

Through the stillness came the groaning of the capstan from forward, sharply contrasting with the low hum from aft as the main motors spun slowly round, and the submarine moved gently astern.

Tom gripped the periscope handles and pressed the hoisting button. The eyepiece rose till it just cleared the waves sweeping by; he stopped it there, peering out.

Looming right ahead in his field was

the *Galway*, her forecastle burning fiercely, steam pouring from her uptakes amidships. The sea was choppy; spray washed his outer lens, interrupting his view. Hurriedly he swung the periscope to port, searching. And there, all unsuspecting, was the *U-19*, or at least, her conning tower, leisurely moving toward the *Galway's* bow!

He swung back to the *Galway*. His boat was sufficiently clear now—at least a hundred yards astern—but he dared not go ahead with that towline still dangling down his bow, likely to foul in the torpedo tube shutters.

The groaning of the capstan ceased. Biff's voice swelled from the tube at his ear—

"Towline all secured, sir."

Tom glanced at the depth gage. 30 feet. Good.

"One-third ahead, starboard!"

Ingram swung his forward controller, the starboard motor came to rest, started again in the opposite direction. The *L-20* quivered, came to a pause, pivoted on her tail and then swung slowly to port. The *Galway's* stern drifted off the right in the periscope field.

"Dead slow ahead, both motors!"

"Dead slow ahead, both motors, sir!" echoed Ingram.

He shifted his control wheels to the lowest ahead notch. The *L-20* stopped swinging and moved slowly ahead. The diving wheels spun round, hurriedly adjusting the planes to suit their forward motion.

Knowles glued his eye to the periscope. After each wave the *U-19* flashed into view, moving more slowly now, but still awash. Would she come up? That would give him more chance for a second shot if his first one missed.

"Five degrees left rudder!"

He must keep clear enough of the *Galway* to maneuver if he had to. The freighter's stern was too close aboard his starboard side for comfort now.

"Five left, sir!" repeated the helmsman.

Tom leaned over the voice tube.

"Torpedo room! Stand by, starboard upper tube!"

Another glimpse through the periscope. The *U-19* was still awash, five hundred yards away, a little beyond the *Galway's* bow and, without doubt now, going to cross over to the starboard side to examine her victim all around before she broke surface again. That was not so good. Hard to say what might happen in the maneuvering necessary to follow the *U-19* round the *Galway*.

"Steady on your course!"

The wheel moved a little, stopped.

"Steady, sir!"

The *U-19* wasn't such a bad target now, crossing his bow, broadside on, conning tower out, part of her gun showing. Tom clamped his periscope pointing dead ahead; the muzzle of that gun was just touching the crosswire. His fingers gripped the firing trigger. The pedestal of the *U-19's* gun came on the vertical wire. He squeezed his fist . . .

IN A WIDE slick of oil the two boats from the *Galway* cruised slowly back and forth, searching. The *L-20*, on the surface, with practically her entire crew lining the rail, lay abeam the silent tramp, watching the oil bursting through the surface in large globules, spreading swiftly out. A stiff breeze whipped by, nevertheless, for half a mile to leeward of the *Galway*, not a white cap showed, and the flattened waves undulated gently beneath an oily blanket.

Several times a mass of air bubbles roiled the spot, then died away.

"Another compartment crushed," muttered Tom.

The water was a mile deep there; there'd be nothing left intact when the broken halves of the *U-19* finally stopped sinking.

A hatless figure on the *Galway's* bridge cupped his hands and megaphoned through them:

"In the boats, there! No use searching any more. Come alongside. We're on fire ourselves."

Erickson was right. There were no survivors.

Very seamanlike now, in startling contrast to their previous exhibition, the boat crews lay back on their oars; with long, swinging strokes the lifeboats rapidly neared the side of their burning vessel. Mr. Mate appeared from aft, flung over a Jacob's ladder, and both boats and their crews were soon back on the *Galway*. There was work enough for them there; before long, the whole ship's company, except the black gang, were manning the fire hoses and pouring water on the burning timber in the forehold. It took two hours' struggle in the smoke and darkness of the closely packed cargo space, before the blazing pit props finally quit smouldering and it was safe to cut off the water. By that time the *Galway* was very noticeably down by the head, and it was a much blackened and blear-eyed Mr. Mate who, after finally mustering the crew, reported to the master that there had been no personnel casualties.

Once more the *L-20* was lying awash under the *Galway's* counter. In the tiny radio booth, Lieutenant Knowles looked over Cobb's shoulder at his radio log. It was brief enough:

FROM *GALWAY* TO C. IN C, QUEENSTOWN. 11:27. SUBMARINE JUST SIGHTED. LATITUDE 50° 10′ N, LONGITUDE, 11° 33′ W.

11:32 *GALWAY* BEING SHELLED BY *U-19*. SHIP ON FIRE FORWARD.

11:37 PANIC PARTY ABANDONING SHIP. *L-20* CAST LOOSE.

11:42 *L-20* HAS JUST SUNK ENEMY SUBMARINE.

1:38 FIRE ON *GALWAY* EXTINGUISHED. NO SURVIVORS FROM *U-19*. WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?

"That's the last one, Captain. It just went out."

A buzzing started in Cobb's receivers. He seized his pencil and wrote the designating letters, the time. Tom watched the message flowing from the pencil point:

1:47. FROM C. IN C, QUEENSTOWN TO *GALWAY* AND *L-20*. VERY WELL DONE. PLEASE RETURN TO QUEENSTOWN.

CHAPTER XIII

CAPTAIN SWENSON

IN A TEMPORARY kitchen in the Custom House at Queenstown, Admiral Bayly hurried about, hastily making coffee for the crew of a torpedoed merchantman which the destroyer *Leopard* had wirelessed she was bringing in. And, scurrying around the room helping him, were his niece, Mary Martin, and Lieutenant Thomas Knowles, his guests at a dinner party at Admiralty House — a party that had terminated unceremoniously upon receipt of the *Leopard's* radio. In the three months that had gone by since the destruction of the *U-19*, his first success, Lieutenant Knowles had become a welcome visitor at Admiralty House, the home of the British commander-in-chief of patrol forces.

With practised hands Admiral Bayly filled a large coffee pot, started it going over a stove in the improvised galley in one corner of the hall, while his niece and Tom busied themselves in setting out on the table a miscellaneous assortment of mess gear—heavy cups, some equally heavy saucers, a few spoons, and what little sugar there was in the larder.

"No cream, I suppose?" asked Tom, looking in vain for a pitcher.

"No, and mighty little sugar, silly," laughed Miss Martin. "Haven't you heard? There's a war on."

The door opened.

A huge negro stepped in, a torn white shirt smeared with blood clinging to his chest and standing sharply out against his coal black shoulders. Behind him trooped a motly crew of woebegone sailors—wet, eyes bloodshot, hands blistered from toiling at the oars, striving to keep their boats from swamping. Hungry, cold, wounded, many of them, by the

blast which tore their ship apart, they crowded into the Custom House, relief showing in their salt crusted faces on once again feeling beneath their feet the solid earth after hours of desperate struggle in tossing boats.

Admiral Bayly rushed forward with the coffee pot and was soon the center of a jostling mob, pouring out the steaming liquid, mixed with brief words of sympathy for the wounded as he served them. Miss Martin passed out cigarets, and to the few who seemed to have salvaged their pipes, a jar of tobacco.

Bluejackets drifted in from the canteen nearby and lent a hand; stragglers from the quay wandered in—some townspeople, some beachcombers, stranded from previous shipwrecked crews. The rattle of heavy cups filled the room, mingled with the murmurs of sympathy from the bluejackets and townsmen as they listened to the survivors' tales of horror and of hardship when their torpedoed ship sank and left them drifting for two days, a hundred miles offshore.

Tom drew back out of the milling crowd, watched it break up in little knots, each excitedly gesticulating around some member of the unfortunate crew. The admiral was still serving; he looked anxiously around to see where Mary had disappeared.

A touch on his shoulder. He whirled to find the girl standing behind, offering a cup of coffee.

"I'm afraid, Lieutenant, this will have to be the rest of your dinner." As he took the steaming cup, she added, smiling, "It'll be hours before Uncle Lewis gets through here, and when you've finished that, we might as well go out for a walk. Do you mind?"

"Only if you go out with some one else," answered Tom.

"You're like all the rest of them." Mary Martin smiled at him, then added, "Oh, by the way, Tom, before we leave, I want you to meet the captain of a Norwegian ship who drifted ashore yesterday alone in an open boat. I've been entertaining him in the canteen all afternoon, and he's had the most terrible adventures at sea. The Germans treated his ship abominably. He was the only one left when his boat sank right under his feet. Let's see, he came in with some sailors a few minutes ago. Oh, there he is!"

MARY walked across the room to a knot of British and American bluejackets clustered round a seaman in the semi-nautical, semi-civilian garb of a merchant marine officer. She pushed through the group of sailors, took the officer in their midst in tow, and led him back with her to where Tom was finishing the last of his cup of very strong, and not very sweet, coffee.

"Captain Swenson, I'd like to have you meet Lieutenant Knowles, captain of the *L-20*. Tom, this is Captain Swenson."

Tom perfunctorily held out his hand in greeting as his eyes turned reluctantly from Mary's face to the newcomer. Then he started. The coffee cup fell to the floor.

Herr Lieutenant Hans Erhardt!

The heavy cup rolled undamaged away as Tom stared fixedly. He thought he detected a sudden flicker of fear in the eyes facing him; if so it was instantly repressed as he felt his outstretched hand clasped, gripped briefly and, in slightly foreign accent, a voice ask—

"What did you say was the name?"

Mary stooped to pick up the cup.

"How careless of you, Tom. One of Uncle Lewis' best armor piercing cups. You might have made a hole in the deck." She turned. "Lieutenant Knowles, Captain Swenson—excuse me; I'll be back soon."

Tom's head whirled exultantly. Erhardt in his grasp at last—disguised, ashore on enemy territory, by all the laws of war an instant subject for the noose, the firing squad!

The two men eyed each other steadily.

Erhardt broke the silence.

"Lieutenant Knowles? So Lieutenant

Knowles, the brave captain of the *L-20*, iss Lieutenant Knowlton. And I read when in Batavia, I finally arrived, that you were dead, lost with your crew in the *C-3*. I am happy to see it iss not so."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am, I regret, only standing still, recognized by a man who should be dead. But what use to run? I could not escape if I tried. And with these men—" he shrugged his shoulders, looking at the crew of refugees—"I torpedoed their ship two days ago. They would tear me in pieces if they knew."

"They—" Tom looked at them contemptuously—"they were your enemies in wartime. But how about what you did to me?" he shot out fiercely. "Our countries were at peace; I was your friend, your guest! That swinish trick you played me cost me my ship, the lives of all my crew!" Tom's eyes burned with the memory, his fingers closed convulsively. "Lieutenant Knowlton had to die there, too! He couldn't go back the way you left him and face the court that thought him dead!"

He seized Erhardt's lapels and dragged him closer.

"Lieutenant Knowlton's dead, all right, but for three years Tom Knowles has lived just to get his hands on your hide and squeeze the miserable life out of your body!"

Tom's powerful hands quivered in front of Erhardt's face; he seemed to have difficulty in refraining from gripping his enemy's throat.

"So you're Captain Swenson, now?" he continued, calming himself with an effort. "And when the Germans sank your boat under your feet, you were the only person left! The truth there, all right! I can imagine the *U-38* submerging and leaving you in your captured lifeboat close inshore somewhere. And that spares me the trouble. You know what happens to spies?"

"Well, my friend, why talk about it? I see Admiral Bayly over there; no doubt he will finish the business quickly enough."

Tom laughed harshly.

"Not so fast. A firing squad works too swiftly. It would never be proper for you; that's too easy a way out. I have a much better way to make you pay—you and the *U-38!*" He looked at Erhardt sharply. "Come, Captain — Swenson, what brings the skipper of the *U-38* ashore as a neutral in Queenstown? Spying is no business for a man who can fight!"

"Why should I answer?" replied Erhardt. "It will hurt the Fatherland and will not help me."

"Nice of you to think of the Fatherland first," said Tom bitterly. "Well, we've been thinking of the Fatherland too—deeply concerned with it. And I'll tell you why you're here: The High Command wants to know what's happening to its U-boats and they picked Lieutenant Erhardt to find out."

Erhardt started, and Tom knew his shot had struck home.

"And that's why I can't dig my fingers into you the way I've been itching to do since that night in Manila!" Tom's contorted face leaned close to the German's. "You remember the *C-3?* Do you know what men feel, trapped in a submarine, whirling downward, waiting to be crushed, perhaps to die of slow suffocation? You don't, do you? Well, you will!"

Tom took a fresh breath and looked hurriedly round. No one was near.

"That's what's happening to your U-boats. You can go back and tell your superior so. And that's what's going to happen to you and the *U-38!*"

Erhardt looked at him in surprise.

"To me? You joke. By tomorrow sunrise, if Admiral Bayly can get his court-martial together tonight, I shall, I think, be interested only in a small piece of Irish real estate."

Lieutenant Knowles shook his head.

"Not this time. But have you found out what you came for yet?"

Erhardt shrugged his shoulders.

"Unfortunately, not yet. One must be careful. A shipwrecked neutral can not ask too many questions. The natives—

they know nothing. In the canteen the girls give out no hints. The sailors—I have not time to talk to them yet. I must, as a refugee, pick up some sympathetic bluejackets, get them drunk, then perhaps I find out. It takes patience, a little waiting, yet.

"When Miss Martin says she will have me meet the captain of the *L-20*, I am happy. He is a brave man; he torpedoed our battlecruisers in our own waters. He will, of course, know what the Allies are doing to our unfortunate U-boats. And I am Captain Swenson, a victim of the U-boats myself. Only yesterday they have sunk my ship. Enough drinks, I curse the hated U-boats, he will have sympathy for the brutal sinking of my ship; more drinks, and the captain of the *L-20* will unbosom himself—at least let drop some hints how they are protecting innocent neutrals from the U-boats. I congratulate myself on my luck; I come and I meet—better the devil himself than Lieutenant Knowlton here!"

TOM'S face was hot, but his thoughts flowed coolly. A word from him, and this man would expiate his crime before a firing squad. But it would not be justice—not to the luckless men of the *C-3*, nor to himself. For Tom Knowles a new investigation of that tragic affair would mean dismissal, certainly the end of his usefulness to the Navy. It must not happen! The debt to his comrades of the ill fated ship must be paid—in full.

Erhardt was evidently telling the truth. If he could get him to take back to Germany some strangely weird tale of what was happening to the U-boats, something that would intensify the horror and the mystery of their disappearance without giving away what was actually happening, the German submarine crews would be still further shaken, their morale would probably soon crack altogether.

As for losing Erhardt himself, now that he had him, the result to be obtained was worth more than mere revenge. Erhardt was the best the enemy had; he would stick by the *U-38*, and there'd be a chance of getting him yet; of getting him where he would suffer the torture of the deep.

If Tom didn't get him with the *L-20*, one of the other decoy ships was bound to before long. Other U-boats, afraid of unseen perils, might skulk off in safety, never make another real attack. He could be sure of Erhardt; as long as the war went on and Erhardt commanded the *U-38*, he would continue to drive home his torpedoes—and the first submarine decoy he ran into would be his finish.

Tom made up his mind quickly.

"So you'd rather meet the devil than me, eh? You'll think so later, but right now you're in luck. Without a single drink, the brave captain of the *L-20* will tell you just what you came ashore for, what you risked death to find out! Come on; let's get out of here before Miss Martin gets back or anything happens to spoil the party."

Tom started for the door, but Erhardt stood stock still, looking at him incredulously.

"Come on, I say," breathed Tom savagely. "Do you want to stay here and be shot?" Erhardt followed.

Tom dodged in and out among the knots of haranguing sailors and made his escape through the door. The silent moon shone down, illuminating the deserted quay, lighting dimly the tall masts of the ships crowding the harbor, glimmering gently across the water lapping the rocky hills.

"Where's your boat?" asked Tom shortly, when they were both clear of the Custom House, and standing out in the open on the stone coping of the quay, certain that no one was near.

"Beached off Auld Head of Kinsale, where I left it when I drifted in yesterday. It's still there, I suppose."

"Don't be a fool. The *U-38*, I mean. Where's she?"

A light dawned on Erhardt's face. His lips curled slightly in the moonlight.

"*Ach*, you think I am simple, eh? That is the reason for all the conversa-

tion, so? You have me, you think I will give away my ship, you will go out and bomb her, then you will shoot me also. Save your breath. Let us go back to your admiral."

"Rot. Don't talk as if you thought you could play me for the idiot you did once in Manila. You know what I mean about your ship. Is she where you can rejoin off the Irish coast, or must you work your way back to Germany through Scandinavia, you being Captian Swenson, now?"

"Under-Lieutenant Sarwetel has his instructions. If I come not to the rendezvous in the lifeboat by midnight tomorrow, with the *U-38* he goes immediately back to Germany."

"Good. Then you can return via that Danish freighter that's sailing for Stockholm tomorrow morning, and get easily to Germany from there. The other way isn't safe. The *U-38* might be sunk on her way back to her base and you'd never return with the information that Berlin wants so badly about our plans. No; you'll go home as a neutral, and let Under-Lieutenant Sarwetel have a chance to show his mettle in bringing the *U-38* back—if he's lucky."

Erhardt looked at him curiously.

"You speak in riddles, Herr Knowlton. Why taunt me now about your secret methods, about my return to Germany? I am resigned. I know well enough that when I return to the Fatherland it will be in a coffin."

"No; I'm not taunting you. You're going back this time safe, with the secret plans you came for. But if you're wise, when you get there, stay, for next time you'll not go back, in a coffin or any other way. You'll be anchored in the deep sea."

"So? And why?"

"Because we have the answer to the U-boat war! We haven't been idle. While you've been playing with poison gas, with long range guns to bombard Paris, what do you think America has been doing? We've mobilized Edison, de Forest, Fessenden, Steinmetz—all the electrical and radio wizards in the country to find a weapon against the U-boat. And they found it! We're using it now; that's why your boats are disappearing."

"*Ach*, yes; but why should you tell me this, why should I believe you?"

"I'm telling you because there's no defense against it, because we've got the U-boats now where we want them; we don't care whether they know it or not. And you'll believe me, all right, when you remember what's happened to your shipmates in the last few months. Where are the seven boats that suddenly vanished on the seas? On the bottom, my friend. And why? Becuase they came in range of our new sonic vibrator."

"Your sonic vot?" asked Erhardt, dazed.

"Our sonic vibrator! Simple: Edison, Fessenden, the other inventors, have perfected a diaphragm that projects through the water a series of resonant vibrations of such frequency that they act on guncotton, on T.N.T, exactly like a detonator; they explode it. Any U-boat that approaches within a mile of such a ship is destroyed by the detonation of her own warheads!"

In the moonlight, Tom caught a shudder in Erhardt's frame. He pressed his advantage.

"Good, is it not? Already the few merchant ships fitted with the experimental sets have destroyed seven U-boats. The end is swiftly in sight now. At Schenectady, our General Electric Company is working day and night on equipment to turn the apparatus out on a production basis. And Steinmetz and his colleagues are working to extend its vibration range beyond a mile. Soon every tramp, every freighter, every transport, will be fitted out with the new sonic vibrator, and then the U-boat war will be over. Why? Because, Herr Erhardt, any U-boat which approaches within torpedo range will destroy herself!"

Tom Knowles shot out the last words savagely, then stopped abruptly and watched the unhappy officer before him. He had made a deep impression. It made

no real difference whether Erhardt believed him or not. Hastily he clinched his argument.

"And now, Herr Lieutenant Erhardt, you know. Take back the secret to Berlin; there is no need for secrecy in this. The U-boat problem is solved. Why should we care who knows?"

He took Erhardt by the arm and headed for the float at the landing a quarter of a mile away.

"If you are wise, when you reach Berlin, stay there. But you will not. You will not believe, and you will pay. Perhaps before then, we may meet again. The seas are wide, but who knows?"

They reached the float. Tom led the way down, commandeering the first boat.

"Come, Captain Swenson; I will see you aboard the *Hjalmar* there and safely started on your way to Stockholm. And to make sure, since you have no passport, I'll stay with you myself till she's under way."

CHAPTER XIV

PAYMENT IN FULL

THE MASTER of the *Galway* balanced himself in the port wing of the bridge as his ship rolled sluggishly under him, squinting through the tiny sextant telescope, trying to hold it steady while he sighted. Slowly he turned the vernier screw, bringing the lower limb of the sun's disk down till its image in the mirror danced just above the sharp line of the far horizon.

"Stand by!"

The quartermaster in the pilot house clutched his comparing watch, glueing his eye on the second hand as it ticked slowly round.

Another turn of the vernier screw. Through the sextant, the disk of the sun just touched the horizon.

"Mark!" called out Erickson.

"5 hr. 11 m. 23 s." The quartermaster jotted down the time in his notebook and looked inquiringly at his skipper. Erickson was peering through the microscope at the vernier scale on his sextant arm, counting the marks to the point of coincidence.

"Twenty degrees, eighteen minutes, eleven seconds," said Erickson finally.

"20° 18′ 11″," the quartermaster wrote in his book just below the time it was taken, drawing a bracket around time and observed altitude to avoid any confusion later when the captain started to work up his sights.

Again the skipper raised his sextant to get another sight to average with his first one. He had to depend on his celestial navigation for his position and he must be sure of not being thrown out of his reckoning by relying on only one sight which might turn out to be a freak. Extra care was necessary; his dead reckoning was practically worthless, because with that pig dragging astern submerged all day long it was next to impossible to estimate with any accuracy either his true course or the distance made good.

Captain Erickson, taking his eye from the sextant for an instant, glanced aft over his stern. Everything was as usual there; nothing showed through his turbulent wake to betray the hidden submarine, and in the low rays of the late afternoon sun he could see Mr. Mate and a few seamen on the poop, dragging an old tarpaulin over the breech of the six-pounder to protect it from the weather. He lifted the sextant to his face, closed his left eye, squinted again through the telescope with his right, while he twirled the vernier screw once more, bringing the sun down to meet the horizon. Again he called out to the quartermaster as he neared the final adjustment—

"Stand by."

Delicately he turned the adjusting screw; the limb of the sun was just coming in contact with the horizon.

And then a tremendous shock rocked the *Galway*. The fragile sextant flew from the captain's fingers and crashed to the deck below. A huge column of smoke and spray rose on the starboard side, enveloped the bridge, mushroomed upward; and for a full minute tons of water and

bits of broken steel rained over the *Galway's* superstructure. The sound was deafening,

Captain Erickson rushed across the quivering deck to the pilot house and seized the engine telegraph. No need to signal anything, no need to simulate anything.

A vast cloud of steam was pouring through the uptakes and the engines were already stopped. The *Galway*, with a huge hole torn in her starboard side, right in way of the bulkhead between machinery space and after hold, was heeled far over to starboard and rapidly settling by the stern as the water, pouring in, flooded the entire after half of the ship!

Off to starboard led an indistinct trail of bubbles. Mechanically Erickson's eye followed it away from his torn side. A half mile off, near the end of the streak, the sunlight glinted on a rapidly rising periscope, already projecting over four feet from the water. The sea was boiling round it; in another instant a conning tower burst through, a hatch flew open, and two figures appeared in the chariot bridge.

The submarine rose no farther.

Erickson seized his glasses, scanned it quickly; nothing but the conning tower showing. There, painted in large white letters, was her number—*U-38*.

Erickson dropped his glasses and turned to his own ship. No need to pretend panic this time—the injuries were real. Men were staggering up from the engine room—bleeding bodies dragging broken arms, broken legs painfully up the steep ladders; from the boiler space the stokers were fleeing to the decks, screaming with pain from burns, terribly scalded by escaping steam and boiling water.

On the superstructure a few uninjured seamen were trying to cast loose the boats, badly hampered by the heavy list to starboard, hindered rather than helped by wounded men crawling up the deck, endeavoring to assist. The *Galway* had to be abandoned in a hurry.

IN ONE SWIFT glance the master took in the situation; there was no time to lose; he must cast loose the *L-20* and then look out for the sinking *Galway*.

He stooped and picked up his telephone.

"Hello, Knowles? We've been torpedoed. Terrible explosion right on our after bulkhead. It's torn open the whole after end; boiler and engine room flooded already; our stern's partly under now and I'm afraid our timber won't keep us afloat this time. What's that? Yes; I'll cast you loose right away. No, never mind us. Where is she? Off our starboard beam, half a mile away, conning tower out. What's that again? What boat? Oh, the *U-38*. What? Yes, the *U-38*. Let go? Yes; I'll cast you off right away. Stand by!"

Erickson moved over a little, stooping low, and called out fiercely into his after voice tube—

"Mr. Mate!"

No answer. He called again, louder this time. Still no reply. Erickson straightened up and looked aft over the rail. The poop was deserted. The six-pounder leaned crazily over, its platform torn from the deck, twisted railings and broken steel surrounding it. The exploding torpedo had torn the poop apart. And Mr. Mate had been there a moment before. Erickson looked farther aft. A few hundred yards astern, tossing in the dying swirl of his wake, some dark spots showed occasionally, breaking surface, disappearing as the broken water churned and boiled.

Cold fear gripped the master's heart. Mr. Mate was gone—overboard, no doubt. No one aft to unshackle, and the stern was fast going awash. He looked wildly astern. Already the water was washing over the lee rail around the poop as the ship rolled drunkenly; there was no time to lose.

The navigator popped up from the chartroom ladder.

"Ready to toss over your hat, Skipper, so's I can abandon ship?"

"Never mind the cap, Willis. The mate's gone from aft—dead, I guess. No one there to cast loose the *L-20*. Get aft, out of sight if you can, and knock free that towing shackle. There's a sledge right there. Quick, cast them loose for God's sake!"

The startled navigator nodded and disappeared down the ladder. He darted aft along the low side of the deck, crouching low beneath the rail. Anxiously Erickson watched him go, weaving in and out among wounded men rolling helplessly in the lee scuppers, struggling to hold his footing on the steeply inclined deck. He reached the poop and vanished through the starboard door.

A long minute went by, an agonizing minute for Lieutenant Erickson as he watched the stern settle, with each roll the water rising higher against the poop. Beneath him maimed seamen struggled with the boatfalls. Over all rose the shriek of escaping steam, whistling up from burst mains in the boiler room, drowning out the cries of the men fighting round the boats.

And a little way off, rolling sluggishly, the *U-38* lay awash, calmly surveying the havoc.

Erickson pressed the telephone headset tightly over one ear, jammed his other hard against the voice tube listening. At last came a call, rumbling indistinctly through the tube. It was the voice of Willis from aft.

"Hello, Captain? I can't cast loose. The shackle's submerged, the poop's flooded for two decks over it, no way of getting to it. What? No; even a diver couldn't get through the hatches to it now."

Erickson lifted his ear from the tube and peered aft over the bridge rail. Yes, Willis was right. That shackle was secured just above their normal waterline; it must be fifteen feet underwater now. And his ship was sinking with the *L-20* firmly shackled to his stern. A little sick, Erickson fitted the telephone receivers over both ears and pressed in the transmitter contact.

INSIDE the *L-20*, Lieutenant Knowles, receivers to his ears, chafed as he waited impatiently for the word that the towline was clear. The *U-38* at last—Erhardt delivered into his hands! Ensign Baker, all his shipmates on the *C-3*—he would avenge their deaths now; Erhardt would pay for his own three years of suffering and torture.

Knowles glanced at his depth gage. Forty feet. No headway on the *Galway* now; they must be a little negative, the *L-20* was slowly sinking. He squeezed the receivers more tightly against his ears, listening tensely. Why was Erickson so damned slow about casting off? Forty-five feet. They must lighten a bit. He turned toward the drainage manifold.

A loud click in the receivers. Instinctively he leaned forward and cut in his own transmitter. All around the control room men listened eagerly.

"Hello. Yes, Knowles." Tom started violently. "You can't let go!" He knitted his forehead, pressing the rubber receivers closer against his ears. In staccato phrases Erickson explained, while Tom's head whirled as the gravity of their situation sank in.

"All right, I got it. Let me know what else you see." He released the contact and dropped his transmitter hopelessly; he tried to think.

Fate seemed always against him with the *U-38*; it was so on the *Walton*, it was so now. Here with his enemy unsuspectingly decoyed within easy torpedo range, the *Galway* could not release him.

But that was not the worst. The *Galway* was sinking. And there was that heavy wire towline, linking his bow to her disappearing stern. In spite of any lightening up that he could do, it would inevitably drag the *L-20* to the bottom when the *Galway* sank.

Tom Knowles looked round at the men clutching the controls, watching him for the signal for action. He had been on the bottom once with a crew like that—who of them were now with him? Mullaney over there, Wolters in the torpedo room,

Cobb. The others? A memory of that long line of flag draped caissons on the Harwich quay, the bugle sounding Taps. This time there would be no coming up for any one when that hawser dragged them down.

He might rise while still he had a chance, and try to cut the steel cable at his end. Could they? Probably no shackles on his end; they must cut the wire itself. But when he broke surface, the game would be up. There was the *U-38* watching; Erhardt would understand then what the real menace was; if he got away with that knowledge all the U-boats would be warned, the element of mystery, of unknown scientific horrors to be faced, would be gone; the submarine campaign against the U-boats would suffer the same decline that had befallen the mystery ship method.

Tom's heart sank. A terrible penalty to pay, now that they had the U-boats at their mercy, sinkings of merchantmen falling off rapidly, frightened U-boat captains afraid to come within effective range for torpedo action.

But perhaps the *Galway* might not sink; her timber cargo was intended to keep her up, even if torpedoed. He could, in that case, by alternately pumping and flooding his adjusting tank, stay hidden somewhere between twenty and fifty feet down. Helpless, truly; and the *U-38* could depart at leisure, unless she tried first to finish the job with shells or more torpedoes; still the *Galway* had but to call and destroyers would soon come hurtling over the horizon to drive the *U-38* off. Erhardt would escape again in either case; Tom nearly wept with rage at the thought. Still, next time they might catch him. He bit his lip. Next time—it was always next time with Erhardt.

He looked at his depth gage. Fifty feet. Something had to be done.

Lifting the transmitter he punched the button viciously.

"Hello, Erickson!" A moment, a click, the master of the *Galway* answered.

"No hope. We're going down! The first boat's away, I'm going in the next one."

"Won't that timber keep you up?" asked Tom in agony.

"Not this time. She hit us on a bulkhead, flooded us amidships as well as aft. And worst of all, the torpedo tore the after hold wide open; the timber is floating out as we go down and we're losing what little buoyancy we have astern. We're going faster all the time now. If you can do anything for yourself, for God's sake, don't wait." A pause while Tom listened horrified; then, "The bow's lifting; we're going awash on the bridge now. Good—"

A click in the receivers and the buzzing ceased. Tom listened a second. No use, the line was dead. He jerked off the headset, tossed it aside. He must act.

"Mullaney!"

Pete left his Kingstons and was at the captain's side.

"Pete, aft to the work bench, get a sledge and a couple of cold chisels. Quick!"

Knowles turned to the voice tube and rang the forward bell.

"Biff, lay aft to the C.O.C. on the double!"

Hurriedly Tom faced the air manifolds, ordered crisply—

"Doggy, stand by to blow the safety tank when I give the word."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Doggy, square jawed, bulldog faced, hunched over the bronze casting and started setting his valves.

A CLINK: Pete squeezed in from the engine room, a short handled ten-pound sledge in one hand, some chisels in the other. As he twisted his way past the periscopes, Biff Wolters ducked through the forward door. They looked at their skipper inquiringly. Tom spoke swiftly.

"Boys, the *U-38's* torpedoed the *Galway*. She's sinking fast. Her stern's under already and she can't unshackle our towline."

A low whistle came from Biff; Tom felt the men around him flinch as the truth sank in. He continued hurriedly.

"There's only one way out for us—we've got to cut that towline at this end. And the *U-38* 'll sink us while we're trying it if we're slow!" He glanced over his shoulder.

"All ready there, Doggy?" he asked.

"Aye, aye, Cap'n."

Tom pointed to the drainage manifold.

"Shift half a ton of water aft!" he cried, then turned again to Biff and Pete, "Listen, boys, we're coming up. I'll blow the safety tank to bring the conning tower out, and we'll ride awash so that we can submerge again in a hurry. The forecastle will be just under; I'll trim down the stern a little, to bring our bow just above the surface so you can get at that hawser. Now, Pete, you man the sledge—Fore River style again, boy, you remember?" Pete nodded.

Tom looked at Biff.

"And you hold the chisel on the wire, Biff, while Pete swings that sledge. A strand at a time, Biff; don't get ambitious and hash it up trying to cut the whole thing at once. Understand?"

"Aye, aye, Skipper. We'll go through it like it was cheese."

"Good. Pete, give Biff the chisels, you keep the sledge. Both of you, up in the conning tower now, and when we break surface, out you go and beat it for that hawser. No more orders!"

They turned to the ladder, climbed up, disappeared through the lower hatch into the conning tower—Pete first, then Biff. Tom reached up, closed the hatch under them, turned the dogs. The conning tower was sealed off in case any shells from the *U-38* crashed through while it was exposed.

The groaning of the trim pump stopped.

"Half a ton o' water shifted aft, Cap'n," announced Doggy.

Tom looked at the bubble in the trim indicator; they were two degrees high at the bow. Good. He moved to the forward periscope and trained it a little to starboard.

"Silence in the boat!"

No need for that; every man was regarding him intently.

"Blow the safety tank!"

Doggy opened the last valve. Compressed air started to rush into the tank under the C.O.C. deck; the water there blew overboard. Tom watched the gage.

Fifty, forty, thirty—the needle dropped rapidly as the boat rose. He glued his eye to the periscope and waited. Another moment and the periscope lens shot through the surface. Tom looked forward. Across a narrow strip of sea covered with wreckage and floating timber, he saw the camouflaged bow of the stricken *Galway* high in the air, her smokestack pointing toward him, the water washing around its base. The rest of the ship had completely disappeared beneath the waves.

Tom started to swing his periscope. Just clear of the *Galway's* side a tangle of blocks and boatfalls dangled above a cutter trying to shove free of the badly listed freighter. The little boat bobbed up and down as the seas broke, banging the steel side as it rose to the crests, swinging away as the troughs rolled by, while the crew strained desperately at the oars, struggling to drag themselves clear of the wash when their doomed vessel took its final plunge. Farther off lay the first lifeboat, drifting idly, the men lying on their oars.

A jolt and the *L-20's* conning tower burst through the surface. The submarine surged up and down a moment as the buoyancy of the conning tower disappeared, then settled to a slow heaving motion in the seaway. Tom looked forward through the periscope; his gun, the rails, about fifteen feet of his deck near the bow, were exposed. The fatal hawser, glistening like a snake as the water dripped from its shining strands, ran forward over the black deck, passed out the bullnose and disappeared into the sea, leading tautly down to the point beneath the surface where it entered that hawsepipe in the now vanished poop of the *Galway*.

A clatter of metal above, and through the lens he saw Biff and Pete pop through the upper hatch, disappearing from his field of view a moment as they clambered down the sides of the chariot bridge, then

flash into sight again abreast the gun, knee deep in the water washing over the hull, running forward through the waves. He gazed a moment at his two friends scrambling up the deck, at the sledge in Pete's hand, at the chisels bulging from Biff's pocket, as they splashed awkwardly toward their task. Then he swung his periscope round to starboard.

TOM'S heart sank. The apparition of a submarine astern the sinking ship had galvanized the *U-38* into sudden life. On her bridge he could see arms wildly pointing in his direction, Erhardt looking him over through his binoculars, sizing up the strange emergence of an enemy in that location, scanning the queer section of wire leading from his stem toward the sinking ship. A brief scrutiny evidently satisfied him. He dropped his binoculars; the men with him vanished, and a second later Erhardt himself followed them. The bridge of the *U-38* moved slowly ahead while at the same time it started to sink beneath the waves. In less than a minute only a thin trace of spray, an occasional glint of sunlight against the tapered eye of her periscope, marked the course of the *U-38* down the starboard side of the *Galway*. Tom's heart throbbed violently as he watched. Erhardt was moving in, full speed, to attack with torpedoes. He would not use his gun.

What chance to escape? Tom opened the lower conning tower hatch, scrambled through to his bridge and looked forward. Biff Wolters was lying outstretched on the stem, face down, clinging to the net cutter, legs dangling in the water, adjusting a cold chisel just clear of his head on the strands of the tow line where it lay hard down against the steel bullnose casting. Straddling Biff's prostrate body, one foot on Biff's back so he could get close enough up in the tapering bow, Pete stood, balancing unsteadily as the boat rolled, the sledge gripped tightly in both hands.

Down swung the sledge past Biff's head. Even amidships, Tom heard the sharp ring of metal on metal as the hammer landed on the chisel. Just beyond Biff's ear he saw the severed strands spring out from the hawser, unwind a turn or more, while the broken wires in the strand suddenly opened out like the quills on a startled porcupine.

Pete lifted the sledge again, rebalanced himself while Biff shifted his chisel, seeking another solid resting place on the wire. He found it; down came the sledge again; more broken wires spread round the bullnose.

Another blow. The unsteady motion threw Pete off balance and the sledge glanced off the head of the chisel, crashing down on Biff's fingers. Biff's legs flew up suddenly, a volley of oaths burst out, then he gripped the chisel again in his bloody hands, once more jammed it down on the wire.

"C'mon, Pete, for God's sake hit it! Whatcha waitin' for?" roared out Biff.

Mullaney lifted his sledge and struck home—the wire was half gone.

Tom left them and swept the sea to starboard. Half a mile off he picked up a wisp of spray—a tiny wake sweeping in a wide circle in toward him, heading now almost straight for his side. The *U-38* was nearly in position to fire, certain of an easy hit. He heard again the ring of the hammer. The fourth strand had parted. Only two were left.

Tom poked his head down the hatch and yelled out—

"Below there, stand by to dive!" He looked hurriedly forward again as Pete parted the fifth strand. A wave washed over his low bow, soaking both men. It swept on; in its wake, Tom saw Biff clawing with torn and bleeding hands in the mass of jagged wires, cursing luridly, trying to get the chisel down on the last strand, while Pete stood over him, tense, silent, his sledge raised for the last blow.

Tom turned away and, with anguished eyes, sought out the wake of that dread periscope. It cut through a wave not six hundred yards off. Then a mass of foam shot up just ahead, a white streak of bubbles started for him. Erhardt had fired!

Tom, looking forward, saw Biff still

struggling with the chisel. He screamed out:

"Torpedo! Biff, Pete! Come in!"

A gruff oath answered him, and Biff shouted back:

"To hell with it! We gotta cut this wire!"

No time to argue. Tom dropped through the hatch, slammed the cover after him and shot downward into the C.O.C, shouting as he dropped:

"Crash dive! Full ahead, both motors!"

He sprang for Mullaney's station at the Kingstons, yanking wide the floods to the safety tank. Ahead of him men savagely spun the diving wheels to full depression; to starboard Ingram threw his motor controls to the full out notch.

The *L-20* jumped ahead violently, planed downward like a rock. Tom leaped for his periscope and looked out. His bow—everything—had disappeared; in a swirl of foam he saw a flurry of arms and legs shooting by the periscope. Biff, Pete—his shipmates abandoned overboard. A dripping head gazed into the periscope. Tom closed his eyes in anguish as it shot by. No choice; they—or the ship. Perhaps both, anyway.

Water washed over his lens, blotting out the surface. They were rapidly sinking as they drove ahead, gathering speed. Tom pulled himself together again, hoisted the periscope to full elevation, brought the lens above the surface and trained it abeam. That streak of bubbles was very close, racing for his periscope. He looked at the gage. 40 feet, 45 feet. His lens went suddenly gray, flooded once more. 50 feet. They were below periscope depth.

THE SECONDS ticked away and the crew waited silently, clinging to their controls. Would the torpedo strike them, tear their fragile boat to bits? A quarter of a minute went by; here and there fingers relaxed their grips as the tension eased. That torpedo, at least, they had dodged; it must have passed over them. But had the enemy fired another, perhaps set to run deeper? At any rate they were deep enough.

"Level off at seventy feet!"

The diving wheels eased, the depth gage slowed in its movement, steadied, as the submarine swam smoothly through the depths.

A sudden jerk shook the boat. The bow dropped sharply, swung round to starboard, then, at a steep angle, the *L-20* started sinking rapidly. Thrown off his feet, Tom shot forward against the helmsman, clutching wildly for support. He grabbed the conning tower ladder, stopped himself, whirled to look at the board. 100 feet and going fast! What was happening?

Bow first—that was the answer. The *Galway* had sunk, was on her way to the bottom, and the *L-20*, like a hooked fish, was being dragged down with her. There was still one strand left uncut on that hawser. Could he break it?

Clinging to the ladder he shouted at Ingram, who was hanging to his controllers,

"Full astern, both motors!" And then, struggling across the deck to Doggy's side, he ordered fiercely, "Blow all the main ballasts! Blow everything!"

Doggy started opening valves; the *L-20* trembled as the propellers reversed and began to strain against the line hauling them down. Tom caught a glimpse at the gage—150 feet now. The bow was much lower than that; their trim by the head was terrible and was rapidly increasing. Everything portable was clattering forward. They would be nearly vertical in a moment. What else could he do? Oh, yes; there were the diving wheels. . . .

"Hard rise, bow and stern planes!" He must get all resistance possible against that strand.

The shrill scream of high pressure air whistling from the banks through the reducers to the ballast tanks filled the boat; in the control room, in the torpedo room, in the engine room, men were frantically opening valves, blowing overboard drinking water, fuel, lubricating oil, ballast—

anything they could to lighten the boat—to break that line before the sinking *Galway* dragged them beyond their depth.

Two hundred feet on the gage, at least 250 at the bow. Tom watched the pressure shooting down on the air banks. Emptying all his ballasts would give him over eighty tons buoyancy; that and his engines should certainly break what Biff and Pete had left of that cable—provided he could get the buoyancy before they went too far. Below 300 feet, he could not hope to empty his tanks.

The screaming of the air died away to a softer pitch; against the greater pressure it was not going through so quickly, now. But the *L-20* seemed to be going faster; she shook more violently.

Tom visioned the scene; the shattered hulk of the *Galway* gathering speed as it plunged stern first, into the deep, the trim submarine dragging by its bullnose at the end of a taut wire, fins set to rise, propellers churning madly astern, like a hooked trout straining to tear free the fisherman's barb.

Why not imitate the fish? A sudden snap might do what a heavy strain could not accomplish. 275 feet. Not much margin left.

"Ingram, full ahead, both motors!"

The chief electrician, startled, looked at the skipper, then from force of habit obeyed the crazy order. Over went his controllers; the trembling ceased as the motors stopped, then the needle on depth gage fairly leaped for the 300 mark as the boat shot down with the motors pushing her. An instant passed; the towline slacked, the trim decreased a trifle. Now!

"Full astern, both motors!"

Ingram heaved the controllers round; the motors stopped, spun into reverse. With a hard jolt the *L-20* took up the slack, jerking the tow line taut. The boat quivered under the shock, then the bow lifted suddenly, started to rise. The last strand had snapped.

"Level off!" ordered Tom hoarsely. "Ahead again, Ingram, full on both engines! Stop blowing the tanks, Doggy!"

They were light, badly out of balance now from the excess buoyancy gained by blowing ballast overboard. Nothing could stop their rapid rise. The depth gage needle fairly spun round the dial toward zero as they floated up; at the diving planes the rudder men fought to level off, helped a little by the driving propellers. Tom struggled to his periscope, and clung to the handles as the boat whirled drunkenly upward. He smiled grimly as he pressed against the rubber eyepiece. The *U-38* would get another surprise.

THE *L-20* hit the surface. Her tapering stern shot halfway out, propellers racing in the air, then fell back with a tremendous splash. Hanging to the periscope Tom peered through to see the ocean frothing and boiling all about them, churned to a milky foam by the vast quantity of air blowing from their tanks, now that the weight of the deep sea no longer held it compressed. For a moment the boat plunged about like a bucking broncho; then the men inside, torn from their stations by the sudden stop, dragged themselves out of the machinery and staggered back to their posts.

Ahead in the waves danced the *Galway's* boats. Tom saw oars wildly waving, pointing astern of him. All around was a mass of floating timbers. Hastily he walked his periscope around the horizon, searching, especially aft. But the *U-38* was not on the surface. Where was she? He could not afford to stay exposed, fully afloat, a splendid target for the German while he searched out her periscope. His motors were still running ahead. Tom noted automatically an irregular thumping as they drove forward; his bow was plowing through a sea of half submerged pit props, tossing them aside like match sticks.

"Stand by!" called Tom. The shaken crew gripped their controls again.

"Hard dive!"

Open went the air vents, down went the diving rudders. A dull roaring in the boat as the ballast tanks flooded; the air in

them whistled out the vents. The boat started to settle, plane under again. Hurriedly Tom looked round the room. Mullaney's post at the Kingston valves was vacant, Wolters was gone from the torpedo room. A crisp order and a machinist's mate came scurrying from the engine room to man the Kingstons; a brief word through the voice tube and a torpedo man, second class, was promoted to command the torpedo gang.

They were at 40 feet again. Cautiously the *L-20's* captain hoisted his periscope, the shining metal tube rising from the floor practically to full elevation before the tiny eye at its upper end burst through the waves.

To the right were the lifeboats, standing out clearly against the horizon from his low observation point. Tom swung his periscope astern, searching carefully the area that the *Galway's* survivors had indicated by their waving when he had so unexpectedly emerged. But he saw nothing there, nor anywhere, save bits of wreckage, waterlogged timbers, a few broken spars. The *U-38*, submerged, was not showing enough of her periscope for him to pick up.

"Steady on this course," cautioned Tom, "and hold her depth." He pulled the periscope down five feet and the *L-20* swam along, invisible.

Hurriedly Knowles moved aft to the radio room.

"Hear anything, Cobb?" he anxiously queried.

"Nothing definite," replied the radio man, listening carefully again while he pressed his earphones tightly against his head. "Just a dull rumble that might be our own propellers."

Lieutenant Knowles leaned out and called to Ingram—

"Stop both motors!"

The propellers ceased churning; Cobb listened intently.

"A faint whir, somewhere." He swung his dial, listening first to the starboard then to port. "Sounds louder to port, Captain."

"I'll swing her, Cobb," said Tom briefly. "You try to spot it whenever I stop the motors."

He went back to his station and started ahead on his motors, meanwhile heading slowly to port. Every half minute or so he stopped to give Cobb a chance to cut in his microphones. Gradually the sound, when Cobb was able to catch it at irregular intervals, sounded in equal volume on each side of the boat. The *U-38* was somewhere ahead of them.

For half an hour the *L-20* swam eastward at increasing speed, following the sounds of the U-boat's propellers, sometimes veering a little one way, then the other, keeping the noise directly ahead, at irregular intervals making a swift search, then housing the periscope. But they saw nothing.

Tom began to worry. He was apparently not overtaking the enemy submarine, though he was now making practically his full submerged speed. And that he could only keep up for less than an hour more, when his batteries would be practically discharged and he would have to slow down radically or come up. But Erhardt would be forced to do the same . . .

HE PUZZLED over the *U-38's* actions. That the German was heading now for shallow water in which he could safely bottom till nightfall was obvious. But at that speed submerged he could never hope for his batteries to last till he covered the twenty miles to the thirty fathom curve. What was Erhardt trying to do? And why had he so persistently kept below the surface, like a hunted beast, never exposing his periscope, never becoming the hunter himself—never attempting to make another torpedo attack on the *L-20* as the two boats circled and dived over the grave of the *Galway?* Why?

Tom looked at the switchboard. Four thousand amperes going to the motors. At that rate, his batteries could not last much longer. And his storage cells had been fully charged that morning; till the attack there had been no drain on them,

as the Galway had dragged them along till she sank.

"And then nearly dragged us the rest of the way," muttered Tom to himself. But Erhardt must be worse off, he had had to use up something in his submerged attack on their decoy. Whose batteries would give out first?

Cobb poked his head from the radio booth and called out sharply:

"They're on the surface, captain. I can hear their diesels now!"

Hastily Knowles shoved up his periscope. There, a little on his port bow, was the U-38, black smoke pouring from her exhausts, water gushing from her freeing)ports as her black hull rose from the sea. Rapidly Torn esti¬mated the range—half a mile at least. And with his quarry headed dead away from him, her narrow stern offered no sort of a target for a torpedo.

"Hard rise!" snapped out Tom, and then swiftly, "Blow all your ballast tanks, Doggy!" Leaning over, he gripped the engine telegraphs and swung them to "Stand by." Bells clanged in the engine room; the machinists leaped to their throttles.

The bow of the L-20 began to rise; under the C.O.C. deck the low-pressure blower started to hum as it forced air into the ballast tanks.

"Man the gun!"

From the battery room, four seamen and a gunner's mate rushed aft, crowded up the ladder into the conning tower. A flash of sunlight gleamed through the eyeports there; the conning tower had broken surface. A click, the hatch flew back; the gun crew clambered out on the chariot bridge and scrambled down on the deck as it lifted clear, swiftly unlimbered the water-tight breech plug housing and removed the cap from the muzzle of their gun.

More bells clanged in the engine room, the muffler ex¬hausts started to spit smoke aft, the diesels coughed and sputtered for an instant, then settled into a steady roar, and the L-20 was pounding along full speed on the sur¬face, hardly sixty seconds after she commenced her rise.

The covers of the ready ammunition storage in the con¬ning tower sides flew open; a brass cartridge case was jerked out, shoved home, the breech plug slammed. Eyes glued to telescopes, the gun pointer and the trainer moved their wheels; the black muzzle wove a sinuous path against the sky as gun, pointer, and trainer, alike, swung slowly back and forth across the narrow deck, pointer and trainer striving to hold their crosswires on, in spite of the yawing and pitching of the unsteady submarine.

A roar, the breech recoiled nearly to the deck, then shot back to battery. Tom, in the chariot bridge now, watched the smoke of the tracer as the shell whistled across a thousand yards of water and plunged into the sea a little wide of its mark. At the speed they were making, their submarine was a very lively platform, the gun pointers were going to have difficulty in getting any hits. Two more shells went screaming after the U-38, only to burst in the waves near by, one very close alongside her bow.

Tom regarded the fleeing ship dubiously. The Ger¬mans led the world in building diesels. Could he hope to match the U-38's speed? Evidently Erhardt thought not, or he would never have showed himself on the surface and trusted to his engines to escape in a stern chase.

The U-38 offered a negligible target, especially for the inaccurate gun of a speeding submarine. And the course Erhardt had taken, a little north of east, was dead to windward; the L-20, fighting her way through the head seas, was swept by breaking waves, the gun crew on her low-lying forecastle were drenched constantly, their tele¬scope sights continually obscured by flying spray, their chances of hitting practically nothing.

Anxiously Knowles watched his shells falling around the chase, splinters and spray marking each burst. So far as he could see, he was holding his own; the U-38 was not gaining; the range was nearly steady. By the laws of chance

some of his shells were bound to strike home soon, unless Erhardt did something to throw them off; and it would be strange if he continued fleeing and made no counter-attack on them.

Tom remembered the Walton's meeting with the U-38. There, in spite of ashcans and torpedoes, damaged already by gunfire, Erhardt had not hesitated to turn on his pursuer and blow the Walton out of the water with his first torpedo. And a destroyer was far more deadly for a U-boat to face than another submarine. What had happened to Erhardt's nerve that he now let them chase him like a hunted rat, and never struck back? Could it be that his torpedoes were all gone?

That must be the answer! Tom nodded vigorously. It must have been his last torpedo that Erhardt had fired at them while they lay helpless astern of the Galway, struggling to get free of the towline to the sinking ship. That must be it. And with his underwater missiles gone, there had been nothing left for Erhardt to do against another warship but to hide. And with that other warship a submarine, as well able as himself to steal quietly through the blue, listening, unhampered by the slap of the waves, the pounding of the seas, for his propellers, and hanging mercilessly to his trail, there was no escape but darkness, or shallow water. And with night still hours away and batteries failing, there was no alternative left but to rise to the surface and run for shallow water. And there he was, fleeing for the coast of Ireland.

But not defenceless.

The U-38 suddenly yawed; the target ahead unex¬pectedly widened out. Instead of the narrow deck and the low tower above it, the surprised men on the L-20 found themselves looking at the U-38's broadside, her gun swung aft clear of her conning tower, rapidly train¬ing on them. Almost before they knew it, the roar of exploding shells enveloped them, drowned out the noise of their engines; splinters rattled on their decks; columns of water spouted in geysers around their forecastle. And then, as suddenly as she had yawed, the U-38 straightened on her course; their target shrank to its former size; Erhardt raced away again toward the fifty-fathom curve.

Lieutenant Knowles looked forward. His gun was firing again; hot cartridge cases clattered overboard, shone an instant in the brine, sank hissing down their wake. But abaft the gun, the first loader lay clutching his chest, a broad streak of red staining the wooden deck.

He rose, feebly reached for a brass cartridge case pro¬truding from the ammunition hoist, endeavored to shove it home in the yawning breech as the plug swung open.

"Below there, grab that man!" shouted Tom.

Too late. The first loader collapsed against the port rail, slid under it as the heaving submarine rolled, and plunged downward, futilely clawing the rounded steel side as he slipped into the sea.

Tom whirled, seized a life ring from the periscope shears and hurled it toward him. But only a limp arm, clutching feebly, showed once as their panting hull drove by. The white cork buoy floated off aimlessly, quickly vanished astern.

The gun barked again1; another shell screamed toward the U-38. The crippled gun crew, every man wounded by splinters from the German fire, were crouching behind the breech, firing as rapidly as possible.

Tom felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned. The man on the little signal bridge between the periscopes above was pointing aft.

"Look!"

On the horizon astern of them a black smudge of smoke stood distinctly out against the sky. Tom lifted his binoculars, examined it. A destroyer coming up with a bone in her teeth from the spot where the Galway had sunk. Erickson had no doubt succeeded in getting off an SOS before his ship went down. Now the ship was racing after them. Ten miles off, she should catch up in twenty minutes. And then Erhardt must submerge or surrender. If he submerged he could hardly escape, with the L-20 chasing him below the

destroyer was just as likely to drop her ashcans on the *L-20*. He would have to stay on the surface himself and help in the search there.

A shower of spray drenched the bridge. Tom ducked involuntarily with the rattle of flying splinters drumming against his hull. The *U-38* had yawed again, brought her gun into action, sending shell after shell at her pursuer. But this time Knowles sheered sharply off to port at the first shot and none of the remaining bursts came close enough to throw fragments aboard.

The *U-38* resumed her course. But as her firing ceased and she headed away from them, Tom noted a slender finger rising above her superstructure, rapidly getting higher. A periscope? No use for that on the surface. He raised his binoculars. Two fine lines ran fore and aft from it. The radio mast . . .

Erhardt had sighted the smoke; he was not going to trust to his escape to get the information he had long been seeking, back to Germany. He was unlimbering his radio.

Knowles leaned over his voice tube and rang the bell to the radio booth.

"Cobb, run up our wireless mast. When the *U-38* starts sending, get on his wave length and jam the air. Don't let him get anything through."

In the periscope shears the creaking of hoisting gears broke out. Their own mast, a thin metal tube with a short yard at its top, rose above the submarine; the antennæ wire stretched taut over the bridge. From below, ear close to the tube, Tom caught faintly the crackling of the spark. Cobb had started sending.

Eagerly he listened between the ear splitting reports of his gun for news from Cobb. It was not long in coming.

"Captain, I'm afraid he's getting his message through, sir. I'm making all the interference I can but his set's too powerful for me to drown out. He's raised some receiving station already and started in code. I'll do the best I can to jam it."

Tom bit his lip. The Telefunken sets the U-boats carried were undoubtedly high powered for long range transmission. And if Erhardt managed to get his message through, the game was up for the decoy ships.

He looked at his gun, futilely shelling a target it could not hit. If only they could bring that radio mast down! Hopeless. They were not gaining; probably when Erhardt was through talking, he would submerge immediately, not waiting for the destroyer to close, and take his chances on losing them till night fell. And probably do it, too, leaving him baffled once more, his decoy sunk, his secret divulged, himself a laughing stock for the man whom he had so casually let slip from the firing squad he deserved.

And Erhardt and his fellow U-boat captains, warned now, would resume their campaign of frightfulness with their old vigor.

KNOWLES gritted his teeth. It must not happen. He would take a wild chance himself. Pressing his lips to the voice tube, he viciously punched the bell to the torpedo room.

"Below there! Set all your torpedoes for ten feet! Stand by to fire all four tubes!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Tom looked over the rail.

"At the gun, there! Keep up a rapid fire, especially if they yaw again!"

He glanced aft. The destroyer hull was barely visible. Still too far off. Dropping through the conning tower he took his firing station, ran up his periscope, set the wires for dead ahead. From forward he caught through the pounding of the Diesels the metallic clatter of chainfalls, the banging of the torpedo tube doors.

A bell rang and a voice floated out of the voice tube:

"All set for ten feet, Captain. All the tubes flooded."

"Stand by, torpedo room, to fire in pairs, starboard tubes first."

Tom pressed his eye to the periscope. Ahead was the fleeing *U-38*, a small black spot in his high powered field. At short

intervals bursts of foam rose around her; he could clearly see the smoke curling from her mufflers, her radio mast swaying as she rolled, the figure of Lieutenant Erhardt leaning over her rail, scanning them through his glasses.

And from aft in the control room he caught the steady crackle of dots and dashes flashing from Cobb's key, trying to jam the ether.

Tom stiffened abruptly. The blue smoke at the stern of the plunging U-boat swung slowly to the left; her conning tower seemed to widen out. The *U-38* was yawing again.

Fascinated he watched her, his fingers gripping the firing pistol. The muzzle of her gun came into view—a space opened between it and her conning tower.

"Right a little!"

The helmsman turned his wheel. Again the crosswires bore on the *U-38's* mast. Tom pressed his key.

"Fire starboard!"

A cloud of spray burst from his bow; he saw the glint of metal as the upper torpedo, with propellers whirling, leaped through its shutter and buried itself in the waves ahead.

A flash of red, a puff of white smoke; the *U-38* was firing at them again. Tom heard the first shell burst outside.

"Left a little!"

The wheel swung back. His crosswires moved slowly over the hull ahead, came fair with the stubmast on the stern. Again his fingers closed.

"Fire port!"

More spray and the two port torpedoes streaked away at forty knots. On the surface now, leaping ahead of them, were four lines of bubbles, diverging slightly, racing onward toward the *U-38* lying diagonally across their course, while the enemy pumped shells at them as fast as the gunners could load.

Peering through his eye piece, Tom saw the muzzle of the gun pointing at him train hastily forward. Erhardt vanished from his rail and the German gun crew hurriedly abandoned their piece and started to drop through the deck hatch. And as he watched, the hull of the *U-38* began to sink.

Erhardt had spotted the torpedoes coming toward him and, not waiting to get his message through, he was submerging to get under them.

But it would take the torpedoes only sixty seconds to overhaul him. And with four torpedoes spreading like a fan over his course he could not maneuver sidewise. How fast could he get down? Tom watched breathlessly while his torpedoes tore along, and his three-inch shells continued to burst around the spot where the *U-38's* chariot bridge was just sinking from sight.

A vast pillar of flame and water heaved suddenly up, the bridge he was watching jerked out of sight, and the dripping bow of the *U-38* rose vertically from the sea. A dull rumble like distant thunder filled the *L-20*, then she quivered violently as the concussion traveling through the water struck her sides. Tom's periscope whipped like a reed; through it the torn bow of the *U-38* seemed to dance crazily among the waves, then lean gracefully over and slide smoothly down through the surface, wreathed in a brilliant rainbow shining in the mist behind. One torpedo had hit!

A fierce satisfaction surged over Tom and his heart pounded furiously. The *U-38's* torpedo room was ripped wide open by the explosion—Erhardt would never get away from him now!

He scurried up the ladder. A wide patch of foaming water right ahead marked where his torpedo had exploded. Beyond it he could see three trails of bubbles still lengthening out—the remainder of his volley.

THE *L-20* speeded into the slick where her enemy had disappeared; on deck and on the bridge eager sailors, blood stained, powder stained, drenched in salt spray, leaned over the low rails, looking for wreckage, for bodies blown out through the shattered sides. But except for blotches of black oil welling up

through the white froth and spreading smoothly out, nothing showed of the *U-38*.

But Knowles dared take no chances. What seemed like miracles had happened before; some terribly damaged U-boats had worked their way back to German bases. But Erhardt must not . . .

"Keep that gun manned, boys, if he comes up again," warned Tom, as he descended to the control room.

He swung the engine telegraphs to stop, and called out to Ingram:

"Stop all the blowers. Dead silence."

The clatter of the Diesels ceased, the whir of the fans died away. A strange quiet gripped the boat.

Lieutenant Knowles squeezed by the compass and pushed into the soundproof booth alongside Cobb, who was still listening on the radio.

"Never mind that. Cut in the MV tubes," ordered Tom, slipping on the microphone headset.

The high pitched note of whirling propellers rang clearly in his ears, stopped briefly, then commenced again. A heavy rumbling noise broke in, mingled with the sharper note of the screws. The *U-38* was scraping her hull along the bottom, struggling to rise. The propellers stopped, the scraping stopped. A groaning echoed in the microphones—the men trapped below were trying to pump. Tom listened intently, then leaned out the door.

"Quartermaster!"

The helmsman left the wheel and came aft.

"Step off ten miles east by north from the last fix on our chart. How deep is it there?"

The quartermaster worked a moment over the chart with parallel rulers and dividers, then called out—

"Forty-five fathoms, sir."

Forty-five fathoms, two hundred and seventy feet. The *U-38* was on the bottom, a crippled hulk, creeping along, trying to pump tanks and slip away. Well, she would never rise now. When that destroyer raced up, a few ashcans over the spot so plainly marked by the noise from her pumps, and it would be over. The *U-38* would lie still forever, then.

He turned to Cobb.

"What ship is coming up?"

Cobb slipped on his radio receiver, threw his switch and started sending, then reversed the switch and listened.

"The *Walton*, sir."

"The *Walton!*"

So the *Walton's* ashcans were to give the *coup de grace* to the U-boat whose torpedo had once blown her in two. Tom laughed grimly as he listened again on the microphones.

From below came once more the rumbling, the bumping along the ocean floor of the wounded *U-38*, striving desperately to crawl away—the groaning of her pumps struggling against high pressure to lighten her up.

The whirring of her propellers rose and fell irregularly, then died away altogether; the scraping and bumping of the hull on the ocean floor ceased. Only the noise of the pumps came from the bottom to the microphones, and soon that faded out, getting lower and lower as the pump pistons slowed down, finally stopping completely. Erhardt's worn out batteries could no longer supply current for anything. The *U-38*, torpedo room flooded, machinery dead, lights gone, came quietly to rest. No further sound rose to the tense listeners, crouching over microphones straining their ears to follow the struggle inside the *U-38*.

The minutes dragged on. Silence from below. Then gradually a new note crept into the microphones, rising to a shrill shriek. Tom listened as it swelled—the high pitched scream of a destroyer's propellers. Well he knew that sound; how many hours had he listened to it beating against his hull as the hunted *L-20* swam through the seas off Helgoland, a helpless prey for the searching destroyers overhead!

The noise rose in volume—the *Walton* must be close, now. Without doubt that terrible sound was beating down against the hull of the *U-38:* Erhardt and his men trapped in their shattered boat were

listening to it as he had listened once, waiting for the crash of the ashcans, the hammer blows that would crush them out.

Knowles saw Cobb's face go pale as he heard that noise. He remembered, too. They looked at each other, and Tom's head drooped. Only Cobb and he of that crew of the *L-20* which fought and suffered off Helgoland were left to hear that roar of reckoning. Of the five who had escaped that horror, Arnold had died in the hospital; Biff and Pete fighting to save their shipmates, to save the boat, swept to their deaths a short hour before when he had plunged beneath the waves to escape Erhardt's torpedo. Biff and Pete! They were the last in the long trail of death for which he could thank Erhardt since that night in Manila long ago. Well, now it was Erhardt's turn. Tom wondered whether he would remember the *C-3* as he lay there in his darkened boat, facing death himself.

The quartermaster knocked outside the door.

"Captain Knowles—"

Tom came suddenly back to his own boat.

"The *Walton's* close aboard, sir. She's wigwagged that she's got a good fix on that sub on the bottom, an' if you'll please steam clear, she'll start droppin' the ashcans, sir."

Tom's head sank wearily down on the table. So this was the end. If only Pete, if only Biff were back again with him, he could almost feel sorry for Erhardt down in the ooze, the slime of the deep, waiting—waiting as he had waited once—for the crash of the depth bombs . . .

Slowly he raised his shoulders and turned to the quartermaster.

"Tell 'em to stand by in the control room. I'll be out in a minute."

He pressed the receivers to his ears. The *Walton* had stopped nearby. Her propellers were silent and he could hear faintly the washing of the seas along his sides, the dull knocking of the feed pumps on the destroyer. No more noise from below; apparently they were no longer able to turn over anything.

A clear note came to his ears, echoing like a bell in the earphones. The ring of a hammer against the metal hull of the *U-38*. Silence again. Then the irregular banging of metal against metal for several seconds, and another pause.

And then in dots and dashes, in the Morse code, the hammer started to beat out a message—dash dot dash dot pause dash dash dash pause, dash dot . . .

Cobb seized a pencil. Tom did the same, following letter by letter as the message echoed up from the bottom of the sea:

CONGRATULATIONS LIEUTENANT KNOWLTON

DEUTSCHLAND UBER ALLES

The hammering ceased. Tom clenched his pencil, staring at the message.

So Erhardt had remembered!

A sharp crack rattled in the earphones. Knowles sprang up, headset cord tightening with a jerk. Only one thing on earth made that piercing noise—a revolver shot.

At brief intervals came others; his fingers trembled as he marked them down. Twenty-seven. Then the silence of the tomb settled over the *U-38*.

Lieutenant Knowles tore the earphones from his head. He staggered unsteadily up the ladder to the bridge.

A hundred feet on his port quarter lay the bow of the *Walton;* leaning over her bridge he could see a three striper waving to him. A voice floated to him from a megaphone.

"We got that message here and what came after, but I'll drop a few anyway to make sure. Get clear!"

Tom rang up half speed and circled away. The *Walton* backed off, swung a little, and steaming slowly over the spot where the *U-38* had sunk. She dropped six bombs, set to burst on the bottom.

The surface heaved slightly. The *L-20* shook as the bombs went off, but the customary pillars of spray were absent. These explosions were so far down they hardly ruffled the waves.

But the effect below was terrific. Vast quantities of oil rushed to the surface,

spreading everywhere. The *U-38*, shattered and torn, lay in pieces in the mud.

IN THE LITTLE wardroom of the *L-20*, Commander Barber, lately aide to Admiral Sims, and now captain of the rebuilt *Walton*, gazed curiously at the lieutenant facing him. He read once more the final message from Lieutenant Erhardt.

"I told my radio officer he'd got it wrong—that the name was Knowles, not Knowlton—but he stuck by his guns. He got it that way, and he won't change the log. So you're Lieutenant Knowlton, eh? We all remember the *C-3* case, all right. I thought you were dead."

"Yes, I'm Knowlton," replied Tom bitterly. "Nobody on earth knew it but that skipper of the *U-38*. And it was on his account I lost the *C-3*. Well, we're square. He's dead now, even if I'm not. What are you going to do about it?"

Commander Barber did not answer immediately, then commented irrelevantly:

"That explains a lot. I'm skipper of the *Walton* now, and I've heard plenty from the gobs on her about how you backed her all the way to Queenstown when she'd been torpedoed. And I was with the commander-in-chief when he rushed from London down to Harwich on the report that an American sub had come in from England with practically her whole crew dead. We both wondered all that day how it came that a chief quartermaster had the brains to get her off the bottom when her skipper'd flopped on the job. So you were skipper of the *C-3*? How'd you escape from her?"

"I never escaped, Commander," replied Tom sadly. "I never went out with her. And that's why she was lost. My fault, all right; and now I've settled with Erhardt for that, I can go back and take my medicine, I suppose. You'll report that message?"

"As a matter of duty, yes. It's in the log. I'm bound to tell the admiral all the circumstances. It'll be up to him after that."

"All right, let's go. Shall I call your boat alongside again, sir?"

"Yes; we'd better get under way for Queenstown. I've got the survivors from the *Galway's* boats aboard; I only stopped long enough to pick them up before chasing you and the *U-38*."

"You didn't find any men in the water, did you?" asked Tom eagerly.

Commander Barber shook his head, rose and started out. Tom followed him from the wardroom, climbed up to the bridge, dropped down where the little deck widened out abreast the three-inch gun.

Barber took a deep breath as he came into the open again, trying to clear his lungs of the oily vapors he had breathed inside the submarine. He glanced around at the narrow deck, the bloodstained planking abaft the gun, the spreading flood of oil still welling up from the bottom, drifting down the wind toward the *Walton*.

His dory shot alongside. Clinging tightly to the rail, he waited till the boat rose high on the crest of a wave, then leaped aboard.

"These pigboats are plain hell, on the top or on the bottom. You can have 'em, Knowlton."

Tom looked aft along his deck, thinking of the men who had fought and died inside and outside that submarine.

"Maybe you're right. There's easier boats in the fleet than the pigs, but they suit the men that man 'em, anyway. Do you think if I get a court, Commander, they'll let me keep my boat till the war's over?"

"If I know the admiral, there won't be any court, and he'll recommend the man that laid away Lieutenant Erhardt and the *U-38* for promotion to commander in the regular Navy, and everything else in the way of honors he can think of. And he won't wait till the war's over to do it, either! My congratulations to Lieutenant Knowlton, along with Erhardt's!" He waved his hand at Tom. "Shove off, Coxswain."

The little dory chugged away toward the *Walton*.

Tom gazed a moment after it. Erhardt was gone, the *U-38* sunk at last. And he would go back into the regular Service. And as a commander. How he would have thrilled at that once, raced to Queenstown to celebrate. But now . . .

With a heavy heart Lieutenant Thomas Knowlton climbed slowly back to his chariot bridge, shoved the engine telegraphs over to full speed and headed westward toward the setting sun—westward towards the spot where his shipmates had been flung into the sea, hoping against hope that somewhere he might pick them up, still adrift among the waves, clinging perhaps to some bit of wreckage.

And behind him the oil, still gushing upward, spread smoothly out over the sea, an undulating pall for the *U-38*.

THE END

The Cape Horn Gold Rush

By EDGAR YOUNG

AS LONG ago as 1860 every one knew there was some gold to be panned from the sands of the Straits of Magellan. Punta Arenas was a supply depot for a fleet of whalers and sealers and the population was a cosmopolitan one, with Americans of the roughest sort predominating.

Hearing that a small Argentine vessel had gone ashore at Cape Virgin, the northern point at the eastern end of the Straits, they hastened thither and found to their surprise the captain, Gregory Ibañez, and his crew furiously digging gold from the sand of the beach. A seaman, frightened out of his wits and not knowing just exactly what he was doing, had rescued a shovel and had swam ashore with it through the surf. There was no fresh water in the vicinity. And, in using this spade to make a well on the beach where brackish water might be obtained for drinking, huge quantities of black sand were uncovered a few feet below the surface; among this sand gold was discovered in pieces ranging from the size of a pin head to that of a grain of corn. All hands, including the salvagers, went away with a quantity of it and traded it for supplies and jags in Punta Arenas. They thought it was just a pocket and that they had cleaned it up. This was in 1876.

Another vessel went ashore in the same spot in 1884. The wreckers again went out from Punta Arenas and got what they could from the beached vessel. At night they camped on the beach and a couple of them who had been with the previous party regaled the others with an account of the gold they had found before. They had some food they found aboard the ship and they decided to do some prospecting the following day. They struck the bar at low tide. It was a layer of black sand underneath six feet of pebbles and overlying a strip of clay. This placer lasted for two weeks before it played out and each man among them had on an average of twenty-five pounds avoidupois of gold. One fellow had thirty-eight pounds by dint of working a trifle faster than the others when the tide was out, as the bar was under water at high tide.

This news set Punta Arenas by the ears,

and the whole town swarmed out to dig gold. Up and down the beach near Virgin Point for miles the pay streak was uncovered. Gold was found by the hundredweight and saved with the crudest sluice boxes and pans. Dozens of penniless men became wealthy enough to go back to the States and to England to live in luxury. Hundreds of others poured it over the gaming tables and bars of Punta Arenas. At one time, when the population of this place was nine hundred, there were one hundred bars there, each run by a lone woman, Indian or halfbreed, with a few bottles of fiery rum and *chicha*. There was also a dancehall with two girls in it and an organ that turned with a crank and bleated an assortment of three mournful tunes. Then the Cape Virgin beach diggings played out.

But Julius Popper had come on the scene. He was a man of rare attainments. His was an unknown nationality; possibly a Yankee. He was an excellent civil, mechanical and mining engineer and a poet, an astronomer, a linguist, a fighter and a gentleman. He got up a party and started south below the Straits with a sailing vessel. Darwin had named a few of the islands and channels, but it was Julius Popper that named most of the rest.

There is considerable land south of the Straits. Tierra del Fuego—Fireland, as Magellan called it when he saw the signal fires of the Onas—is about the size of New York State. There is a Cockburn Channel, Brecknock Pass, Desolation Bay, Whale Sound, Darwin Sound, Beagle Channel, Northwest Arm, Lennox Island, New Island and Port Pantaloons. These two last have a history, for it was upon New Island that Popper's party found gold "large as grains of corn." His part was one hundred pounds avoirdupois of said dust, and you can figure that out if you want to at twenty dollars per ounce, Troy weight. He went up to Buenos Aires and was killed in a fair fight or stabbed in the back.

And Port Pantaloons! That's where the seven greenhorns went looking for gold. It was just over on the island of Tierra del Fuego from Punta Arenas, a nice little cove with a brook and grass growing down to the water's edge. Lone prospectors passing in catboats saw them working there. They related it in the gambling houses and saloons of Punta Arenas and it became the standing joke of the town. Fools! Every one knew the paystreak was in the black sand just on top of a layer of clay with six feet of gravel over it. Those boobs looking for it at the grass roots—it was a huge joke.

In six weeks they came in. They *had* found it at the grass roots. One of them staggered under a sack that contained exactly sixty-three avoirdupois pounds of rough gold. But there wasn't any more. The whole town went over and couldn't pan a day's wages from the bar.

Thus it went on. Find after find was made. One lunatic in Buenos Aires sent down a machine that ran with windmills and which cost one hundred thousand dollars, but the wind only blew when the tide was in and the bars deep under water. A bar was struck in Minas Creek just back of Punta Arenas and a hundred and twenty men got rich. More "poor man's gold" was found than was ever found in Alaska or California, but the rush never did amount to much. The prospectors were mostly all sailors and tramps.

The geology is queer. The bars show remains of kangaroos, monkeys, parrots and sloths. It seems that the world was smaller than it is now and expanded. Australia and Asia were pulled loose on one side and Africa on the other. The coasts almost fit, and paleontology proves them to have been united once. Nothing sank. They just separated. At some time there were a ledge and a river that were lost in the shuffle. The river followed a line which is almost the exact boundary line between Argentina and Chili down through Tierra del Fuego. Some day big suction dredges are going to find some more of that Cape Horn gold. Boob, eh? How about those seven greenhorns?

RILEY GRANNAN'S LAST ADVENTURE

By SAM C. DUNHAM

Without doubt the most popular item ever published in Adventure, *this piece has for almost twenty years held its original appeal and freshness for our old readers. It has had several reprintings, and now in response to numerous requests, we are bringing it out again, confident of the pleasure it will give to new readers as well.* —THE EDITORS

IN THE desert mining camp of Rawhide, Nevada, in the spring of 1908, there was spoken over the body of a racetrack gambler one of the most eloquent panegyrics that has been heard in this generation. That no more highly finished and impressive eulogy had been pronounced at the bier of any man since the immortal discourse of Robert G. Ingersoll at the grave of his brother, was the opinion of the men who heard it—and there were men in that audience whose opinion was worthwhile.

The man who delivered the oration was Herman W. Knickerbocker, an itinerant minister of the gospel, prospecter and mine promoter. It was spoken over the body of Riley Grannan, whose meteoric career as a racetrack plunger, furnished sensations for the newspapers for years.

The atmosphere of the occasion was unique. For an environment there was

the bleak, wind swept desert; for an audience, a motley crowd of adventurers drawn from almost every clime by the lure of gold; for a theme, the life, not of a multi-millionaire, dying peacefully and full of honors in a Fifth Avenue mansion, but of a busted gambler, losing his last chips in a miner's shack; and the orator, not an overpaid pastor of a billion dollar congregation, but a humble wanderer from the fold.

The rush of fifty thousand gold seekers into Rawhide in the spring of 1908, brought together as remarkable an aggregation of men as ever gathered in so short a time in any mining camp. As if by magic, there sprang up a thriving, noisy, bustling city of 12,000 inhabitants, where a few months before the only sound that broke the immemorial silence of the desert was the weird cry of the coyote, holding its night long vigil in the barren, ghostly hills.

From the four corners of the world and its intervening spaces had come mining engineers of international reputation, young mine promoters, real estate dealers, millionaire mine operators, merchants, lawyers, journalists, preachers—representatives of every profession and calling—all lured by the irresistible magic of gold.

There were many distinct types—men of rare talent, even of genius; others that were ordinary, and some very common. On the whole, however, the camp of Rawhide, at its inception, before the advent of the riffraff of camp followers, contained as fine a body of men as ever foregathered in the West. They represented the true democracy of character which our higher civilization has so signally failed to produce in our overgrown cities. Those who live in the artificial atmosphere of a great city can not realize how much the natural—which are the good—impulses of the race dominate individuals in all the relations of life in our Western mining camps. There the search for gold does not have the demoralizing effect that the frenzy for money grubbing has in the big cities. There, instead of stifling all the finer sentiments, turning men into selfish beasts, as it does in so many instances in a big town, it has the opposite effect, making them generous, big souled, and humane. There you find all the sterling qualities playing forcefully all the time—divine charity, the greatest thing in the world, and all the good things that grow out of it.

Among the first to be attracted to the camp was Herman W. Knickerbocker. Mr. Knickerbocker was born in Louisiana, the son of an eminent jurist. At the age of twenty-one he was ordained a Methodist minister, and became the pastor of a fashionable congregation in New Orleans. He was soon called to the Trinity M. E. Church in Los Angeles, where he earned a reputation as one of the most eloquent pulpit orators on the Pacific coast. His broad and liberal views proved unacceptable to the leaders of the church, however, and he was tried for heresy, but was acquitted. He then resigned.

Having marked dramatic talent, Mr. Knickerbocker decided to adopt the stage as a profession. With this end in view he went to Tonopah, in the spring of 1903, and there erected the Tonopah Opera House. This enterprise was in advance of the demand for dramatic entertainment, however, and the opera house reverted to the Tonopah Lumber Company, sharing the fate of many other too ambitious structures in that camp.

Mr. Knickerbocker then went to work as a common miner and laborer underground in the Tonopah mines, for four dollars a day, to support his wife and four children.

DURING his stay in Tonopah, Mr. Knickerbocker occasionally gave evidence that he was obsessed with a deep seated and well nigh overpowering melancholy. He had a lovable, childlike disposition which endeared him to all who knew him. He was usually cheerful, even optimistic; but at times it required all his fortitude to overcome this tendency to melancholy. On one occasion, while he was trying to raise money to do the location work on

his Goldfield claims, he went to Diamondfield Jack Davis, the most picturesque and one of the most generous characters in camp, and offered to sell him a Colt .45 for a few dollars.

"Jack, I don't know whether to sell this gun or to blow my brains out with it," Mr. Knickerbocker said.

Jack, who only a few years before had been sentenced to hang for the alleged killing of a sheepherder up in Idaho, but had been pardoned, replied:

"Knick, old boy, you mustn't talk that way. Guns are made to blow the other feller's brains out. You just let me take care o' your'n till you feel better, and here's fifty dollars to cheer you up a bit. An' don't never talk to me again about using a gun on the wrong man!"

When the first news of the great gold strike at Goldfield was brought to Tonopah, Mr. Knickerbocker joined the rush to the new district and located several claims. To provide money to do the location work required by law to hold his claims, he gave a series of Shakespearian readings in Goldfield and Tonopah, which were both financially and artistically successful. In these readings his characterizations of Macbeth, and of two or three other characters, showed that he possessed dramatic powers that would have assured him a successful career in the legitimate drama.

Within two years, Mr. Knickerbocker made his clean-up and left Goldfield with a fortune of about $300,000. For a year he was lost sight of by the people of the camp; but somewhere he must have been an active factor in financial affairs, for at the end of that time he returned to Goldfield, broke.

He was among the first to join the stampede to the new camp of Seven Troughs, in northern Nevada, and was the first to make a big clean-up there.

Half a year later, when news of the Rawhide discoveries was brought to Reno, Mr. Knickerbocker was found in the thick of it once more.

Still later, when the camp was at the height of its boom, came Riley Grannan, the famous racetrack plunger, who opened a gambling house that for a time was the most popular resort in the camp. Here some of the biggest stakes ever wagered in the West passed over the tables.

Mr. Grannan, who had made and lost several fortunes on the turf, was dead broke when he reached Reno on his way to Rawhide. He had spent the winter in San Francisco. When the newspapers began to print the sensational news sent out from Rawhide by the press agents, he saw in these despatches the name of Nat C. Goodwin, who was the leading operator in the camp. He learned that George Graham Rice was in Reno with the mine promoting firm of Nat C. Goodwin & Co. Having known both men in his racetrack days, he decided to go to Reno and ask them to stake him to open a gambling house in Rawhide.

It is a very common thing in the West for men to stake one another to go into business, particularly when the man asking for a stake has been successful in his line of endeavor. The Tonopah club at Tonopah had made millions for George Wingfield and his partners. The Northern at Goldfield had made big fortunes for Tex Rickard and his associates. What more natural than to believe that a gambling house in Rawhide, managed by so well advertised a character as Riley Grannan, would become the most profitable enterprise of its kind in the camp and make a fortune for its owner? It did not take Mr. Grannan long to convince Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Rice that it was good business to stake him, and that it was more than likely that he would repay them handsomely.

They supplied him with $20,000, taking his notes without interest, for the amount. First, however, they tried to dissuade him from going to Rawhide. He was just recovering from a long illness and was feeble. They feared he could not stand the rigors of the climate. He said he could stand any climate "this side of hell." He offered them an interest in the

business. They refused to accept it. Their only condition was—

"Return the money when you can."

The enterprise was not a financial success. From the start, Mr. Grannan played in bad luck. His resort was jammed with players day and night, but he was a steady loser.

ONE COLD, stormy night, unheedful of the warnings of friends, Mr. Grannan walked out of his gambling house, after a six hour sitting at poker, and took in the town without wearing an overcoat. As a result of the exposure, he fell an easy victim to the prevailing scourge, pneumonia.

When news of Mr. Grannan's illness reached Reno late the next night, Mr. Rice rushed a noted physician across the desert, one hundred and fifty miles to Rawhide, in an automobile, at the cost of five hundred dollars. But the physician's efforts were unavailing. Riley cashed in.

Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Rice defrayed the expenses of Riley's illness and funeral, and sent his body to the old home in Kentucky for interment. The bill was eighteen hundred dollars. But no word of their unostentatious generosity in this instance, as in many others that might be cited, was ever given to the press, although they had their grip on the press agenting of the camp. When the final curtain fell on Riley Grannan's Rawhide drama, his angels had expended about $22,000 on the disastrous venture.

Whenever a miner died in Rawhide, Mr. Knickerbocker officiated at the funeral. The ceremonies on these occasions, although of the simplest character, were always rendered impressive by his heart stirring words. Therefore, no one in Rawhide was surprised when it was announced that Mr. Knickerbocker would perform the rites over the departed racetrack plunger.

Indeed, it was most fitting that Herman W. Knickerbocker should say the last words at the bier of Riley Grannan. The two men, born and reared under such different circumstances and following callings so widely divergent, were yet strangely akin in temperament and experience.

Mr. Knickerbocker was nurtured in luxury and educated for the higher walks of life. He had been the brilliant pastor of two fashionable congregations. But he had fallen by the wayside, had risen and had fallen again.

Mr. Grannan was born of poor parents. He began life as bell boy in a Louisville hotel. He was drawn to the racetrack by listening to the talk of horsemen when they gathered in Louisville twice a year to attend the races. His career on the racetrack was meteoric. But poverty and hardship were nothing new to him.

There was much in common between the two men. Both were generous to a fault. Many stories are told of Mr. Knickerbocker's open handed generosity to the needy while he lived in Tonopah and Goldfield. It is a tradition of the race tracks that no one ever applied to Mr. Grannan for aid and was turned away. After Mr. Knickerbocker left the ministry and made his fortune in Goldfield, he ran the gamut of a sporting life. There was in the nature of each, a keen appreciation of the higher things of life, and neither had sunk so low as not to be able to rise again. No one could realize better than Mr. Knickerbocker the heights and depths of such a nature as Mr. Grannan's.

The funeral was typical of a new mining camp. There was no hearse. The body was conveyed in an express wagon from the undertaker's tent to the improvised chapel, a variety theater at the rear of the saloon. There gathered an audience so remarkable in aspect that it probably could not be duplicated anywhere else on earth. Men and women of every social station and grade closely commingled. A solemn hush hovered over the strange assembly. Dead silence reigned where a few hours before half drunken auditors boisterously applauded the ribald jests and obscene songs of low grade variety

actors. But around the bier was gathered a throng of as sincere mourners as ever assembled at the coffin side of a departed friend.

The eulogy pronounced by Mr. Knickerbocker was powerfully dramatic. His appearance was in keeping with the scene. Clad in the rough garb of a miner and wearing high boots, he looked the part of a typical pioneer. He deeply felt his subject. His eyes were dimmed with tears and at times his voice was choked by emotion.

Mr. Knickerbocker spoke without notes. A stenographic report of the oration was made by W. P. de Wolf, a well known California newspaper man, and sent to Reno the same evening without revision by Mr. Knickerbocker.

Standing on a dais beside the catafalque, with one hand lightly touching the forehead of the dead man and the other uplifted, Mr. Knickerbocker told his auditors he proposed to show the deceased to have been a dead game sport, and that he had not lived his life in vain. He went on thus:

"I FEEL that it is incumbent upon me to state that in standing here, I occupy no ministerial or prelative position. I am simply a prospector. I make no claims whatever to moral merit or to religion, except the religion of humanity, the brotherhood of man. I stand among you today, simply as a man among men, feeling that I can shake hands and say 'brother' to the vilest man or woman that ever lived. If there should come to you anything of moral admonition through what I say, it comes not from any sense of moral superiority, but from the depths of my experience.

"Riley Grannan was born in Paris, Kentucky, about forty years ago. I suppose he dreamed all the dreams of boyhood. They blossomed into phenomenal success along financial lines at times during his life. I am told that from the position of a bell boy in a hotel, he rose rapidly to be a celebrity of world wide fame. He was one of the greatest plungers, probably, that the continent has ever produced.

"He died the day before yesterday in Rawhide.

"This is a very brief statement. You have the birth and the period of the grave. Who can fill the interim? Who can speak of his hopes and fears? Who can solve the mystery of his quiet hours that only he himself knew? I can not.

"He was born in the sunny southland—in Kentucky. He died in Rawhide.

"There is the beginning and the end. I wonder if we can see in this picture what Ingersoll said at the grave of his brother? 'Whether it be near the shore, or in mid-ocean or among the breakers, at last a wreck must mark the end of one and all.'

"He was born in the sunny southland where brooks and rivers run musically through the luxuriant land; where the magnolia grandiflora, like white stars, glow in a firmament of green; where crystal lakes dot the greensward and the softest summer breezes dimple the wave lips into kisses for the lilies on the shore; where the air is resonant with the warbled melody of a thousand sweet voiced birds and redolent of the perfume of many flowers. This was the beginning. He died in Rawhide, where in winter the shoulders of the mountains are wrapped in garments of ice, and in summer the blistering rays of the sun beat down upon the skeleton ribs of the desert. Is this a picture of universal human life?

"Sometimes, when I consider the circumstances of human life, a curse rises to my lips and, if you will allow me, I will say here that I speak from an individual point of view. I can not express other than my own views. If I run counter to yours, at least give me credit for a desire to be honest.

"When I see the ambitions of man defeated; when I see him struggle with mind and body in the only legitimate prayer he can make to accomplish some end; when I see his aim and purpose frustrated by a fortuitous combination of circumstances over which he has no control;

when I see the outstretched hand, just about to grasp the flag of victory, take instead the emblem of defeat, I ask, what is life? What is life? Dreams, awakening, and death; 'a pendulum 'twixt a smile and a tear'; 'a momentary halt within the waste, and then the nothing we set out from'; 'a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more'; 'a tale told by an idiot; full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'; a child blown bubble that but reflects the light and shadow of its environment and is gone; a mockery, a sham, a lie, a fool's vision; its happiness but Dead Sea apples, its pain the crunching of a tyrant's heel. I feel as Omar did when he wrote:

"We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shadow shapes that come and go
Round with the sun illumed lantern held
In midnight by the Master of the show;
But helpless pieces of the game He plays
Upon this checkerboard of nights and days,
Hither and thither moves, and checks and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.
The ball no question makes of ayes and noes,
But here or there as strikes the player goes;
And He that tossed you down into the field,
He knows about it all—He knows—He knows!

"But I don't. This is my mood.

"Not so with Riley Grannan. If I have gaged his character correctly, he accepted the circumstances surrounding him as the mystic officials to whom the universe had delegated its whole office. He seemed to accept both defeat and victory with equanimity. He was a man whose exterior was as placid and gentle as I have ever seen, and yet when we look back over his meteoric past we can readily understand, if this statement be true, that he was absolutely invincible in spirit. If you will allow me, I will use a phrase most of you are acquainted with. He was a 'dead game sport'. I say it not irreverently, but fill the phrase as full of practical human philosophy as it will hold; and I believe that when you can say one is a 'dead game sport' you have reached the climax of human philosophy.

"I believe that Riley Grannan's life fully exemplified the philosophy of these verses:

"It's easy enough to be happy
When life flows along like a song;
But the man worth while
Is the man who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong.

"For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth
The homage of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.

"I know that there are those who will condemn him. There are those who believe today that he is reaping the reward of a misspent life. There are those who are dominated by medieval creeds. To those I have no word to say in regard to him. They are ruled by the skeleton hand of the past, and fail to see the moral beauty of a character lived outside their puritanical ideas. His goodness was not of the type that reached its highest manifestations in any ceremonial piety. His goodness, I say, was not of that type, but of the type that finds expression in the hand clasp; the type that finds expression in a word of cheer to a discouraged brother, the type that finds expression in quiet deeds of charity; the type that finds expression in friendship—the sweetest flower that blooms along the dusty highway of life; the type that finds expression in manhood.

"He lived in the world of sport. I do not mince my words. I am telling what I believe to be true. In the world of sport—hilarity sometimes, and maybe worse. He left the impress of his character on the world and through the medium of his financial power he was able with his money to brighten the lives of its inhabitants. He wasted it, so the world says. But did it ever occur to you that the most sinful men and women who live in the world are still men and women? Did it ever occur to you that the men and women who inhabit the night world are still men and women? A little happiness brought into their lives means as much to them as happiness

brought into the lives of the straight and good. If you can take one ray of sunlight into their night life and thereby bring them one single hour of happiness, I believe you are a benefactor.

"Riley Grannan might have 'wasted' some of his money in this way.

"Did you ever stop to think how God does not put all his sunbeams into corn, potatoes and flour? Did you ever notice the prodigality with which he scatters these sunbeams over the universe? Contemplate:

"God flings the Auroral beauties round the cold shoulders of the North; hangs the quivering picture of the mirage above the palpitating heart of the desert; scatters the sunbeams like gold upon the bosoms of myriad lakes that gem the verdant robe of nature; spangles the canopy of night with star-jewels and silvers the world with the reflected beams from Cynthia's mellow face; hangs the gorgeous crimson current of the Occident across the sleeping room of the sun; wakes the coy maid of dawn to step timidly from her boudoir of darkness to climb the steps of the Orient and fling wide open the gates of the morning. Then tripping over the landscape, kissing the flowers in her flight, she wakes the birds to herald with their music the coming of her King, who floods the world with refulgent gold. Wasted sunbeams, these? I say to you that the man who by the use of his money or power is able to smooth one wrinkle from the brow of care, is able to change one moan or sob into a song, is able to wipe away one tear and in its place put a jewel of joy—this man is a public benefactor. I believe that some of Riley Grannan's money was 'wasted' in this way.

"We stand at last in the presence of the Great Mystery. I know nothing about it, nor do you. We may have our hopes, but no knowledge. I do not know whether there be a future life or not. I do not say there is not. I simply say I do not know. I have watched the wicket gate close behind many and many a pilgrim. No word has come back to me. The gate is closed. Across the chasm is the gloomy cloud of death. I say I do not know. And if you will allow this expression, I do not know whether it is best that my dust or his at last should go to feed the roots of the grasses, the sagebrush or the flowers, to be blown in protean forms by the law of the persistence of personal identity beyond what we call death. If this be all, 'after life's fitful fever, he sleeps well . . . nothing can harm him further'. God knows what is best.

"This may be infidelity; but if it is, I should like to know what faith means. I came into this universe without my volition — came and found a loving mother's arms to receive me. I had nothing to do with the preparation for my reception here. I have no power to change the environment of the future; but the same power which prepared the loving arms of a mother to receive me here will make proper reception for me there. God knows better than I what is good for me, and I leave it with God.

"If I had the power today by the simple turning of my hand to endow myself with personal immortality, in my finite ignorance I would refuse to turn my hand. God knows best. It may be that there is a future life. I know that sometimes I get very tired of this life. Hedged and cribbed, caged like a bird caught from the wilds, that in its mad desire for freedom beats its wings against the bars only to fall back in defeat upon the floor, I long for death, if it will but break the bars that hold me captive.

"I was snowbound in the mountains once for three days. On account of the snow we had to remain immediately alongside the train. After three days of this, when our food had been exhausted, the whistle blew that meant the starting of the train out into the world again. It may be that death is but the signal whistle that marks the movement of the train out into the broader and freer stretches of spiritual being. As we stand in the presence of death we have no knowledge, but always, no matter how

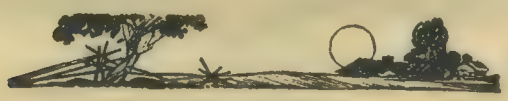
dark the gloomy clouds hang before me, there gleams the star of hope. Let us hope, then, that it may be the morning star of eternal day. It is dawning somewhere all the time. Did you ever pause to think that this old world of ours is constantly swinging into the dawn? Down the grooves of time, flung by the hand of God, with every revolution it is dawning somewhere all the time. Let this be an illustration of our hope. Let us believe, then, that in the development of its destiny, it is constantly swinging nearer and nearer to the sun.

"And now the time has come to say goodby. The word farewell is the saddest in our language. And yet there are sentiments sometimes that refuse to be confined in that word. I will say: Goodby, old man! We will try to exemplify the spirit manifested in your life in bearing the grief at our parting. Words fail me here. Let these flowers, Riley, with their petaled lips and perfumed breath, speak in beauty and fragrance the sentiments that are too tender for words. Goodby!"

There was not a dry eye in the audience when Mr. Knickerbocker finished his masterly discourse. Some of those present, indeed, acted as if spellbound. Surprise at the remarkable performance of the orator was depicted on the countenances of the thoughtful among the hearers.

The coffin was carried to a motor truck, which was to convey it to the railroad. Silently the pallbearers, selected from the most prominent residents of the camp, took their places behind the improvised hearse. Then the funeral cortége, embracing nearly every man and woman in Rawhide, slowly wound its way down the cañon, beneath a wintry desert sky.

At the foot of the cañon the procession halted and dispersed, while the motor truck proceeded across the desert to the railroad station, thirty miles away, whence the body of Riley Grannan was transported to the old home in Kentucky, to be laid to rest "where the magnolia grandiflora, like white stars, glow in a firmament of green; where crystal lakes dot the greensward and the softest summer breezes dimple the wave lips into kisses for the lilies on the shore; where the air is resonant with the warbled melody of a thousand sweet voiced birds and redolent of the perfume of many flowers."



HORSESHOE LAGOON

By CAPTAIN FREDERICK MOORE

A Novelette of the South Seas

BENTLEY had but a few minutes for a hasty examination of the sleeping cabin. Kendler was on deck talking with Captain Hervant. It was late in the evening and Bentley had pretended to turn in early. Now, for the first time since sailing from Singapore, he had a chance to look through Kendler's room.

It was necessary to be very cautious. The prisoner chained in a cabin next to Kendler's might hear bags being opened or a drawer forced. Feeney, the American gunman who had robbed a bank in Australia with his gang, was being taken back to Sydney by Kendler, who was employed in the branch bank in Singapore.

There was no moon that evening. The stars were bright and through the main cabin skylight, Bentley could see them swaying as the *Sultana* lurched along under a pleasant sailing breeze. A gimbal lamp on the bulkhead was turned low over the chart table. The flame quivered as wisps of wind came down through the skylight.

Bentley paused and listened. He could hear the prisoner breathing regularly in his bunk. It might be wise to blow out the lamp, and Bentley considered the matter. But as Kendler and the skipper, on the quarterdeck, were sitting well abaft the wheel box, they could not possibly see through the open skylight, which was well forward of where the native helmsman stood at the wheel. And before the helmsman could see it would be necessary for him to leave the wheel and stick his head under the raised glass of the skylight. But as Bentley wore pajamas of dark cloth, and had tied about his neck a large black handkerchief which could be lifted to cover his face, the helmsman had little chance of making out a figure in the dim main cabin. Holes had been burned through the handkerchief to serve as eyeholes—yet no one would suspect that the apparently careless burns in the fabric turned it into a mask.

Bentley decided not to extinguish the lamp. Its soft glow upward through the skylight was the normal thing, but if the lamp went out suddenly the helmsman might have his attention drawn to the main cabin.

The droning voices of Captain Hervant and Kendler came down through the after companionway. The Chinese cook of the schooner had washed his dishes and was forward with the native crew, smoking his iron pipe. Feeney could not get out of his cabin, for his handcuffs were secured by a long chain to a ringbolt over his head.

With a careful hand Bentley slowly turned the knob of Kendler's door. He took care that there was not a click of the bolt. The door opened slowly. Bentley had managed the day before to oil the hinges when the door was hooked wide open and the pins of the brass hinges exposed. Bentley always made careful preparations. And, as it had been three weeks since the *Sultana* had pulled her anchor up from the bottom of Singapore Roads, Bentley had attended to many details before making this search.

Bentley had taken passage in the schooner because he suspected that Kendler was carrying something like a quarter of a million dollars in Bank of England notes. Feeney had been captured in Singapore with the cash.

There were two portholes in Kendler's room. But they were closed. As the vessel heeled to windward under the pressure of the sails, the glassed holes were revealed as luminous disks gleaming with starlight. But the little room was too dark to examine things with any accuracy.

Bentley closed the door behind him. There was only one bunk, built high over a double set of drawers. Beyond the door there was only space for a man to move; and with the door shut, the drawers barely had room to be taken out. The more distant drawers appeared to be braced by a pair of small bags against the bulkhead. Bentley could see the bags with his pocket flashlight. There was clothing hanging from the bulkhead. A large, box-like camera and holding cases for glass plates were thrown in the foot of the bunk. Kendler seemed to be an enthusiastic amateur photographer. He was a mild little man, joyful over his sea trip.

Considering the layout for a minute, Bentley shot the beam of his light about. He had a quick brain for sizing up a room. The first two weeks Kendler had kept his door locked. Bentley had made it his business to gain the confidence of the other passenger.

None of the drawers was fitted with locks. Each had a wooden button, intended only to keep the drawers from sliding out when the vessel rolled at an extraordinary angle. Bentley stooped

and found that the two drawers opposite the door opened easily. He did not bother to search inside them. He moved the bags. Then he discovered that the lower drawer had its button secured by a nail driven in either side of it.

Bentley smiled. He recognized the precautions taken by a nervous person to protect hidden valuables—precautions which led straight to the spot desired to be kept secret. The nailed button indicated that Mr. Kendler had no intention of being robbed without forcing the burglar to make a noise.

Bentley smiled because he knew how the drawers under berths aboard the *Sultana* were constructed. He had studied those in his own room. There was no partition between uppers and lowers. When the upper drawer was removed it was simple to look into the one below.

BENTLEY removed the upper drawer. In the lower, halfway to the middle, there were books neatly piled. But they were jammed in so hard they could not be removed without leaving signs of disturbance. On his knees, with the flashlight thrust into the dark opening, Bentley made out a large paper package. It was tied with strong cord. But one end had the wrapping folded over, and he could reach it with his fingers. He carefully drew a fold aside.

There were several tiers of small packages, ranged with their ends toward him. He ran his fingers over the end of the nearest package. It was rough in texture, but yielded to pressure of a thumb. It bulged upward a little under force. There were wide rubber bands at the ends.

It would not be wise to dislodge the small packages. Like the books, they were wedged tightly. He did not want Kendler to know that the packages had been tampered with in any way.

Again he bulged a package upward. By sticking his head almost into the hole of the upper drawer, the top of the small package came into better visibility under the light. He saw that the top was a five-pound Bank of England note. He estimated about four tiers, each tier about ten packages wide. Assuming that the packages had no notes higher than five pounds—about twenty-five dollars in American money—there was a lot of money in that drawer.

"So I had the dope right!" Bentley told himself with satisfaction.

He placed the wrapper back under the string, smoothed the folds of paper carefully, shoved the upper drawer home and swung to the door. He threw his light about to make sure that there was nothing out of place to betray his visit and, shutting off the battery, paused to listen before opening the door to return to the main cabin.

When he had reached the main cabin he listened again. There was no change in conditions. The prisoner was still breathing regularly, and the voices of Hervant and Kendler drifted down through the skylight.

Bentley walked to the after companionway and went up three of the steps, so that his head was a little above the quarterdeck.

"Hello, there, Mr. Kendler!" he called. "Your prisoner waked me up calling for a drink of water. I can give it to him, unless you want to come below yourself."

"I'm awfully sorry, Bentley," replied Kendler. "Would you be kind enough to give him a mug?"

"I'll fix him up. And I'm coming up for a smoke." He dropped below again at once.

As he filled the mug from the pitcher which was always left nights on the table in the little mess room near the galley, Bentley grinned into the lantern overhead.

"Things are working out fine," he muttered. "Now that I have a chance to talk to Feeney, I'll make up for lost time. Nothing like patience."

He passed forward through the main cabin and opened the door of the room occupied by the prisoner.

There was a rattle of light chains as Feeney waked at the opening of his door.

"Who's that?" he called, alarm in his voice.

"I thought maybe you'd like a drink," said Bentley.

The prisoner craned his neck forward.

"Oh, you," he said sleepily. "I forgot where I was. Thought the bulls had come down on me at the hotel."

The light from the gimbal lamp showed him to be a young man, lean of visage, damp hair rumpled on his forehead.

"Here's your drink," said Bentley, and thrust forward the mug.

"Thanks," said Feeney. "What time is it?"

"Little after eleven."

The nickel handcuffs on the prisoner's hands glistened as he reached for the mug. From each cuff the light chain went up over his head, passing through the ringbolt. By this method, his hands were not held close together by the cuffs and the usual short chain.

"Where's Mr. Kendler?"

"On deck with the skipper."

"You're about the only man aboard who bothers much about me," said Feeney.

"I'm sorry for you, chained up like this."

"This ain't much like what I look for when I get back to Sydney."

"What do you expect to get?"

"Twenty-five years—up or down."

"What do you mean, down?"

"You can figure it out for yourself. There was a man killed in the Sydney robbery."

"Oh, I see," said Bentley. "The Straits *Times* had quite an article on how you'd been sneaked aboard the *Sultana* from jail in S'pore. Said she'd sailed, but I managed to catch her as her anchor was coming up. Why were you smuggled away?"

Feeney thought for a minute.

"Two of my mob have been caught. The others think I've informed on 'em—King's evidence, to get a light rap. Kendler brought me in this schooner to work on me and see what he could make me cough. I'm not talking. I'm glad I'm not on a steamer. Some of my mob might blow a hole through me."

Bentley nodded in understanding.

"Want another drink?"

"No. But I could use a smoke. Kendler won't let me have matches when I'm alone. He's a counter-jumping sap. Does he think I'd burn myself with the schooner, to beat the police!"

BENTLEY offered a cigaret and struck a match. Feeney leaned forward. In the flame, Bentley's face was revealed. His rounded cheeks looked surprisingly red. Only a man new to the tropics would have such sunburn. He was not more than thirty. There was a humorous squint to his eyes as he regarded the prisoner—a knowing, superior look.

"I'm an American like yourself," he remarked.

"A lot of good that does me," said Feeney, as he puffed at his cigaret.

Bentley blew out the match. In the swiftly contrasting darkness which followed, with Bentley's figure cutting off the light of the distant gimbal lamp, he moved a hand to the pocket of his pajama jacket, then reached toward the bunkboard as if to steady himself against the motion of the vessel. From his fingers there dropped silently a flat file. It fell on the sheeted mattress. Feeney did not know the significance of Bentley's action.

"You had all the cash that was taken from the bank, didn't you?" asked Bentley.

"I had most of it," said Feeney.

"How much did you have?"

Feeney did not answer at once. Finally he growled—"What is it to you?"

"Nothing. I'm just curious."

Feeney laughed.

"You're a good scout. I had about three hundred thousand."

Bentley whistled.

"That was plenty!"

"Plenty to lose. We took a shot at it and lost."

"The papers said you didn't have any

cash on you when they captured you in S'pore. That is, not enough to amount to anything."

"I know the papers said so. That's why my mob are gunning for me; they knew better."

"The cash was left in S'pore, I presume."

"You presume right. The branch bank there copped the stuff I had."

"Would you be surprised to hear that Kendler's got it with him?"

Feeney sat up again, abruptly.

"Say, bo! Are you kidding me?"

"No; not for a bite in three hundred thousand . . ."

Feeney was silent for a moment, staring at the passenger. Then the prisoner blew smoke toward the open porthole. His chains rattled softly as he took his cigaret from his lips.

"What the hell are you talking about, bite?" he demanded in a low growl.

"I'm talking turkey, kid. Kendler's sneaking that money back to Sydney—as evidence against you. And he's been asking you to make a squeal, ain't he?"

"And are you in on the game with Kendler?" Feeney's voice was hard and suspicious. "All you two are after are to make me say something that'll make my rap bigger. I know the law in Australia is full of traps. All a man's got to do is 'yes' some innocent little question, and he hands himself another ten or twenty years. But if you think that you can stool me for Kendler, you've got another think—"

He stopped in surprise. His hand had encountered the file. He lifted it, held it against the light of the gimbal lamp by inclining his head to look under Bentley's arm.

"What the devil is this?" he asked in amazement.

Bentley moved aside to let the light through the door to better effect. He gave the file a scrutiny.

"Why, it looks like a file," he said quietly.

"Where—where would it come from?"

"It was probably left there by the native carpenter who put the ring over your head to run the chain through," said Bentley. "That—or you've got a friend aboard." He chuckled.

"Say, bo!" whispered Feeney. "You put that here!"

"Don't get me involved in this business," warned Bentley with mock seriousness.

Feeney disregarded Bentley's remark. Instead, the prisoner ran the tips of his fingers over the surface of the file to test the sharpness of the milling.

"If that ain't what I call a break," he said reflectively.

"Seeing that Kendler's got that three hundred thousand along, a file might come in handy to you."

"What was that you said about a bite?" asked Feeney.

"You heard what I said. Files don't grow in bunks, do they?"

"You certainly look for a profit in the hardware business."

"Well," said Bentley, "a file, and a getaway, ought to be worth a hundred and fifty thousand."

"Are you trying to stool me for Kendler?"

"No. And a man in your fix ought to take a chance on anybody."

"I ought to, but will I? What good would it do me to cut these chains off? I can't walk across the ocean any more than you can."

Feeney's tone was mildly scoffing, but there was an undertone of eagerness.

"I don't intend to get my feet wet," retorted Bentley.

"What kind of a ticket do you intend to write?"

"You've got my quotation—a half of the take between us. I've taken a chance on you."

"What chance?"

"The file. You could put the spot on me with Kendler. You could make yourself popular with him by showing the file, and being unwilling to try and escape. I'd find myself in a fix, but you might be buying something for yourself. The only way I'd be safe would be to be

one of Kendler's men, trying to stool you. You've got to take the chance that I'm no clever dick from the States."

Feeney pondered.

"How do you know Kendler's got that money with him?"

"I've seen it—not ten minutes ago. The first time I was sure it was aboard. There'd be nothing in it for me to play you for a getaway—with no sweetener in the pot."

"You sound pretty good to me," admitted Feeney. "But you can't buy chips in my game, and not play through. And you might lose. You know where you'd stand then."

"The Australian police would play me for one of your mob."

"You're a dick, or a crook," said Feeney. "You're wise—but I'd rather play with a wise guy."

"I've done my stretch in the States. Never mind where—we can talk that over later. I'm on the run out here, and we could work together."

Feeney laid back on his pillow and sighed heavily.

"What a break!" he whispered. "Where do we go from here?"

"To an island. This ship is leaking. I made it leak. She'll be anchored in the morning—in a very nice place, the skipper tells me. There's a plantation with one white man."

"We could have a lot of fun on a plantation," suggested Feeney. "But Kendler and the skipper might object."

Bentley reached under his jacket. He put into Feeney's hand a substantial automatic pistol.

"This schooner'll be laying over on her side, with natives hammering at her bottom," he went on hastily. "That won't make it very comfortable here. Kendler'll want to go ashore. If he takes you, he'll take the cash. Watch your chance and give him the works. If the planter finds out that you've finished Kendler, I'll take charge of you—and the cash. Even if the coast guard comes in, with Kendler's letters to the police in Sydney—and his letters from the bank—I may be able to pose as Kendler. Here are letters to me you can plant on Kendler. A piece of money would shut the skipper's mouth, because, of course, the big boob doesn't know Kendler's got a drawer full of notes. I'll be ready to go ashore when I hear a shot—and I'll go alone. We can quit this vessel, or sail with it, just as things fall."

"You certainly are a great help," said Feeney, as he hefted the weapon in his hand. "See that Kendler has anything he wants for breakfast."

Bentley chuckled.

"And you get his last words."

II

CAPTAIN HERVANT and Kendler stopped talking as Bentley came up through the companionway. He took a folding stool which rested against the bitts on the port side, seated himself and cocked his feet up on the rail.

"Feeney have his drink?" asked Kendler.

"Yes—and I gave him a smoke. Stood by for a few minutes. Poor devil! Even if he is a dangerous criminal, you've got to pity any human being in such a jam."

Captain Hervant gave a grunt. He wore a straw hat with a soft hanging brim which flopped in the wind. His crossed legs were sprawled on the deck before him from his low rigged chair, the canvas seat being only a few inches above the planking. He held a brass telescope across his knees. He had been studying the stars.

Kendler turned and looked at the skipper. It was plain that he disapproved of something. There was silence for a few seconds. The native helmsman, head lifted to watch the luff of the mainsail, gave the schooner half a spoke of the wheel. The ropes chirped in the sheaves and the *Sultana* bore away from the wind a little.

"You shouldn't ha' let that man be smokin'," said Hervant. His tone was a trifle sharp. "He could burn the ship if

he was minded to." The skipper lifted his telescope and aimed it at a star.

"He'd hardly burn the ship, being chained as he is," said Kendler.

His voice was thin. He was visible in the starlight as only part of a man, for he wore a white shirt and a white cloth hat, but from the waist down he was covered by a dark blanket.

Bentley got to his feet.

"I'll go down and make sure that he's all right. It was my fault—and I don't want to disturb you, Mr. Kendler."

"I wish you would," said Hervant, before Kendler could make any reply. "Seein' that man's likely to git hung, he might do all kinds of desperate things. If I was expectin' to dance on a rope's end I'd take a whirl at raisin' hell to git loose."

"I don't see how he could expect much chance of getting loose at sea," said Kendler.

Bentley waited at the companionway to hear what was said, as if Kendler might decide to go below himself.

"He heard me this mornin' sayin' we'd have to put in at Horseshoe Lagoon to stop that leak we got," said the skipper. "And he knows we must be gittin' close up to the island, seein' I expect to make it as a landfall by daylight or better."

Kendler laughed.

"All right, Skipper. If Mr. Bentley will make sure the prisoner's mattress isn't on fire, I'll appreciate it. I'll go below later and make sure everything's all right before I turn in."

Bentley disappeared below.

"Now, I put that down for considerable gall," said Hervant quietly, when he was sure Bentley was out of hearing. "To be givin' your prisoner a smoke! And this time of night! And then comin' up here and tellin' us."

Kendler touched the captain's arm.

"I feel that way about it myself—and I'm glad you noticed his action. I didn't go down because I want to speak privately to you on that very subject."

Hervant turned his head.

"Hey? Private—about what?"

"About Bentley. I don't like the man."

Hervant shifted his feet and pulled his legs up. He leaned forward over his telescope.

"Why, you been gittin' along with him fine, all the time." There was surprise in the skipper's tone.

"Naturally I haven't shown my dislike for him—or my suspicions."

"You mean you're afraid of him?"

"No, not exactly afraid, but he's been prying into my affairs. Cautiously, of course. A little, day by day. A question now and then, apparently asked with no special plan in mind. But I find that his questions all run along a certain line. He wants definite information."

"He can't do no harm talkin' to you," said Hervant, as he leaned back in his chair. "If that's all you're worryin' about, you can quit now. Everybody does a lot of talkin' on board ship—and only the three of us here."

"You forget my prisoner. He makes four white men aboard."

"What if he does make four?" demanded Hervant quietly. "He don't count for nothin' to be worryin' about. And you ain't worryin' none about me, are ye?" He giggled at the idea.

"No," said Kendler. "Of course I'm not worried about you. I'd hardly be telling you about my ideas on Bentley if I didn't trust you."

"Then take the prisoner out—and me out—and all you got to worry about is Bentley. Come to him, I ain't got no special likin' for him myself. But I got to be sociable. He's a passenger, like you. And I don't see what particular harm he could go and do you."

"No, he probably couldn't do any harm—alone," said Kendler. "But he's taking every chance to talk with Feeney when we're in hearing. And now he has taken the liberty to talk privately with him."

"Pooh!" said Hervant. "Like I said, talk don't do no harm."

"What if he should try to help Feeney to escape?"

"Escape! Hell, you mean on the island we come up to in the mornin'?"

"Certainly. You said yourself that Feeney heard us talking about Horseshoe Lagoon."

"But for what would Bentley want to let that bank robber go loose on Scudder's Island?"

"I don't know, exactly, what anybody would want to help Feeney escape for. He might've told Bentley that there was some of the bank loot buried somewhere, and if Feeney could escape, they'd go and get the money."

CAPTAIN HERVANT was silent for several minutes. "Bentley ain't such a big fool as to listen to a man on his way to git hung."

"Perhaps not. It may be that Bentley was sent aboard this schooner by some of Feeney's gang to help him escape, so he wouldn't give information against the others."

Captain Hervant lifted himself in his chair.

"Say, you might be right!" he declared. There seemed to be something of panic in his voice.

"He's coming up again," warned Kendler. "Be careful that you don't say anything to make him afraid we're observing him. I'll want to go ashore in the morning and make some pictures on that island. I'll take Feeney along—to keep him away from Bentley." He rose. "I'll go down and make sure everything is all right."

Bentley did not appear in the companion hood as promptly as they expected. Kendler lingered, waiting.

"Don't you be afraid of me stickin' my oar into the business," asserted Hervant. "No, sir! Somebody's likely to git hurt, and I'm responsible. I don't want to be in no courts with the hangman around the corner."

Kendler started for the companion. The next minute Bentley came up.

"He's all right, Mr. Kendler. I'm sure there's no danger of fire."

"Thanks. I'll have a look in on him, and then try for a little sleep. Good night, Skipper."

"Night," said Hervant.

Bentley walked aft and seated himself in the chair just vacated by Kendler, close alongside Hervant.

"Did you go and give that prisoner matches?" demanded the captain.

"No. I lit his cigaret for him. I don't see why you think a man chained up would want to burn himself with the ship."

"It ain't that, so much," said Hervant. "You've got Mr. Kendler all worried up."

"Worried? About what?"

"He says you been doin' too much talkin' to that Feeney of his." He coughed wheezingly.

"Well, let him worry. He doesn't need to get on edge because I speak to Feeney now and then."

"He's afraid you're aboard to let Feeney escape."

Hervant's voice was little louder than a whisper. He laughed a little over the humor of Kendler's fears.

"That's an interesting idea," said Bentley. "What does he think I'd be doing that for?"

"Thinks Feeney might've told you he had money buried."

"He said that to you?"

"Now don't that beat hell for an idea?" asked Hervant.

"He's a smart old geezer," said Bentley. "Buried money!"

"He's no fool," said Hervant. "He says he's takin' Feeney ashore tomorrow, at Horseshoe Lagoon, to git him away from your influence. He'll be takin' his camera along—to make pictures."

Bentley slapped a knee.

"Won't that be nice! What could be more perfect!"

"You goin' with him?" asked Hervant.

"No, not when he goes. I might go ashore a little later—and join 'em."

"You've got things pretty well worked out for the mornin'," remarked Hervant, a trace of amusement in his tone.

"I've got my plans all made—for tomorrow."

"Then you found somethin'?"

"He's got about three hundred thou-

sand nailed in his lower forward drawer. Packages of five-pound notes, anyhow. It was Feeney who says there was three hundred thousand—counting in dollars as a rough estimate."

"Then Feeney's ready to do his share of the job?"

"Sure! The file and the gun made him sure that he was on safe ground with me."

"You kept me out of it?"

"Yes. Feeney and I are to run away from the ship, if we find the money stacks up. Of course, I know from what you've just said about pictures to be taken ashore, that Kendler intends to smuggle his cash along with him in the morning. If he's got a scare about me, he probably intends to quit the schooner himself, and stay with the planter, Scudder. He was asking a lot of questions this morning about Scudder, when you told him about the leak having to be fixed."

"You've about hit it," said Hervant. "On the camera—and on Scudder. Kendler don't intend to come back aboard."

"And for once, he's right," said Bentley.

"You keep me out of it, right up to the time Kendler's been shot," advised Hervant. "If anything goes wrong, if he's got confidence in me, he'll run and tell me. Or I can go over to Scudder's and pump Kendler, if Feeney don't pop him off on the way to the plantation."

"Yes, it would sound too much like a Christmas tree in the middle of the ocean if I was to tell Feeney you were in on the thing. He'd be afraid, with so much money involved, to play with two. He'd be afraid we'd trim him."

"Come to that, how's the best way to trim him?"

"I'll have to shut his mouth," said Bentley.

"We could sail away and leave him at the atoll."

"But Scudder would—"

"Scudder would what?" broke in Captain Hervant. "You don't expect Feeney to go to Scudder and tell the planter that he's a bank robber who escaped, havin' just shot a man?" He shook with silent laughter.

"Not exactly," agreed Bentley. "But Feeney might shoot Scudder. Anyhow, even if he hid in the jungle, Feeney might get caught some time by the coast guard. If he was identified as Feeney, and was to be hanged anyhow, he could tell the police that we helped him to get away and kill Kendler. That would give Feeney some satisfaction—and it would interfere, probably, with our vacation next summer."

"We'll have to figure how we deal with Feeney when he's finished off Kendler," said Hervant. "The bank knows there's money aboard; most likely it's insured."

"We're not supposed to know—in case Kendler and Feeney shoot themselves up," said Bentley.

"We won't know nothin' about no money. We'd have to bury it ashore if the coast guard popped in here. We'd want to tell Scudder how them two come to be dead ashore."

"You said the cutter *Farralone* would not be at Scudder's island, on the regular trip, till some time next month."

"We might wait a month. I'd like to have the schooner searched by the coast guard. That'd be official. It'd put us in the clear. We could sail into Port Jackson—or Sydney Harbor—and if there was any row about money bein' hid aboard me, we could give 'em the laugh."

"I see," said Bentley. "You know the sea business. But you've got to admit that I knew what I was talking about when I told you it was a hundred to one shot that Kendler was carrying the loot." He slapped Hervant's arm.

"You sure did. And to think of him gittin' the cash ashore in that camery of his! That'll be funny!"

Bentley stood up.

"I'm going to bed. If I stay here any longer Kendler'll be suspicious."

"All right," said Hervant. "Don't sleep too hard. Feeney's got a gun—and the two of 'em ought to be watched. We don't want Kendler shot aboard here. Feeney's got to wait till mornin'."

Bentley waved his hand and left the quarterdeck.

III

THERE was a swift redding of the horizon to starboard. The sea crimsoned with long streamers of reflected fire. The stars vanished and the *Sultana* stood out clearly before the rising sun. It took charge of the world.

Ahead, a great green fence stood on the ocean athwart the schooner's path. The tops of the fence posts were fuzzy, waving like plumes in the morning breeze. A hurdle for a giant's horse, that great barrier several miles long.

At the bottom of the barrier of lofty trees, there was a band on the sea of dazzling whiteness, fringed with a wavering apron of ivory, lace-like, and shifting with a translucent shimmer of pale green at the edges. The apron was surf breaking lazily on a coral beach. The fence resolved into a vast circle of coconut palms, shaking their mop heads under the pressure of the lazy monsoon.

The *Sultana* hauled her wind. Presently she opened a hole in the fence. There was still, mirror-like water inside, and a great circle of beach which had no surf. She slowly entered Horseshoe Lagoon, her sails drawing only enough to give her steerage way, and occasionally shivering. Then the flood tide flowing in began to surge her along. The murmur of the outside surf was drowned by petty sounds—the thumping blocks as her sheets slacked, the snap of the leeches as her sails caught a puff of wind and filled, the threshing of her gaffs as she began to roll. She then swung broadside to the tide as the palms formed a lee for her.

Captain Hervant was at the wheel. The *serang*, a tulip-blue turban on his head, stood by the anchor gear forward, looking aft to the skipper. Hervant did not move until the *Sultana* had drifted a thousand yards into the lagoon. Then he threw up a fat and freckled arm and waved it ahead of him, as if he had suddenly found the *serang* to be worthy of a blessing.

The *serang* gave a shrill scream, as if the captain's gesture betokened evil. The native crew, gathered on the forecastlehead, leaped clear of the chain cable. Then, with a flourish such as an executioner might use with an ax, the *serang* swung a sledge over his head. He struck something which clanged terrifically in the morning silence. He himself leaped away from what he had struck. There was a roar of agony. Under the schooner's forefoot there was a great splash. The anchor chain was whirring through the hawsepipe.

The *Sultana* began to turn her head toward the chain, but it did not check her way, for the links were still running and draping themselves over submarine gardens of red, white and brown, looping over forests of jade green on the bottom of the lagoon.

Kendler came running up through the companionway. He was wearing his nightshirt. The sunlight revealed him as a man about forty, but looking older because his hair was white above his ears. His face was lined somewhat with the worries of business, and his eyes were not too strong. He shrank from the sudden light. He was an incongruous figure, not at all harmonious in that picture.

"Did I go and wake you up, Mr. Kendler?" asked Hervant.

He pushed his floppy straw hat to the back of his head, folded his freckled arms and showed his teeth behind the short pipe in a crafty grin. He was bare to the waist, his powerful shoulders hewn out of bulging muscles. His legs were covered with pajama trousers patterned in bright colors with designs of flowers and green parrots with red eyes and yellow beaks. Hervant belonged there—lagoon, brilliant sky, concealing fringes of palms. He did not, as Kendler, suggest a morning newspaper, a silver coffee pot and a veranda with motor cars running past.

"I was asleep, yes," said Kendler.

He stared about him, taking in the almost complete circle of still water, some five or six miles across. The enclosing strip of land and trees was about half a mile wide. The double circles of palm groves—one circle along the outer beach, and one on the inner shores of the lagoon

—were separated by a low ridge, overgrown in spots by low scrub, trailing vines, and occasional patches of jungle.

At the far end of the still water, opposite the entrance to the lagoon, the land was highest, sloping gradually away in curves until the jaws at the mouth of the lagoon had diminished to little more than exposed reefs, less than a mile apart.

In the distance, toward the far side, there were low sheds visible near the beach. Yards were marked out with white lines—enclosures made with low rows of coral piled up.

"Nice place," said Hervant. "You ought to git some good pictures."

GULLS whirled upward from the shores, circled the topmasts of the *Sultana* and laughed harshly. The *serang* was chattering over the stowing of the sails. The galley stack was smoking fragrantly. The schooner seemed unnatural without her usual motion. She was gritting her teeth over the taut anchor chain.

"I don't know," said Kendler. "It looks awful lonesome here."

"Oh, you'll like it. Young Scudder, the planter, lives down at the far end there—where you see the copra sheds. That youngster's got rich here in three years."

"Rich? On what?"

"Copra. Them trees was growing here when he come. And nobody on this atoll. He brought natives and picked up the nuts, that's all."

"He can get rich here for all of me," said Kendler. "But how can you stop a leak, at anchor, here?"

Hervant waved a sweaty hand toward a wide section of white beach off the starboard quarter.

"We'll kedge ourselves closer in at full high water. Hard sandy bottom there, and a rise of five feet at spring tides. At low water, the schooner will rest on her keel in the sand, and careen. Then we git at the seam she's pulled, and calk it."

"How long will that take you?" Kendler's gray eyes squinted at the skipper. "Time enough for me to look ashore?"

Hervant's face had a bland and fatherly look as he regarded Kendler with sly intentness. He had not shaved for several days and the beginning of his beard showed gleams of white. He was careful not to show an eagerness. His voice was careless as he answered:

"Mebbe a day, mebbe a week. Now, if you land on this side, it's only a couple of miles to Scudder's place. A nice walk if you go up on the ridge into the bush."

"I could walk along the beach, couldn't I?"

"Oh, don't follow the beach. It'll burn you up, the sun on that coral sand. I could send you to Scudder's with a boat, but I'm goin' to need all hands to kedge and careen."

Hervant wanted Feeney to have cover for his murder.

"Oh, I'll keep out of the sun," said Kendler.

He turned to the companion hood and lifted from a leather holder a pair of binoculars. He studied the copra sheds ashore.

"Scudder's house is behind them low buildin's," Hervant went on. "You can't see the house—up in them leafy trees behind the palms. It's got a thatch roof."

"I'm afraid I'd be intruding, to walk in on him," said Kendler.

"Intrudin'! On the only white man here? Not on your life! As for that man Feeney you got below, you can leave him here while you're gone. He wouldn't have no place to git away to."

Bentley had warned the skipper that there must be no suggestion that Feeney go ashore. Kendler could not possibly suspect a trap if he took the prisoner along without having the idea broached.

"I'd better take Feeney with me," said Kendler. "I'd feel safer about him. And I need him to carry my camera and plates. He said he'd like to go."

"You can suit yourself," said Hervant. "Perhaps you'll feel safer, as you say."

Kendler went below to dress. Bentley appeared on deck, wearing white shoes, but the same dirty trousers he had worn

since sailing. Those trousers established the fact that he had no intention of going ashore with the boat which would take Kendler off the schooner.

"How're things goin'?" asked the skipper guardedly. He glanced toward the companionway.

Bentley did not reply. He walked aft. Hervant followed.

"Feeney's got the links filed so he can slip the chain any time he wants to."

Hervant nodded approval.

"He's takin' Feeney with him—and he'll follow the jungle trail, like I told him. The beach ain't no place to shoot him. Tell Feeney Scudder might be lookin' over this way with glasses, or comin' out in a boat?"

"He understands," said Bentley.

"When Feeney's done his stuff, he comes back with the camera and plates and gives us a hail. We're to pick him up. We may not have to say a word to Scudder at all."

"You're pretty sure he'll take that money ashore with him in the camera?"

"If he didn't, he'd be a bigger sap than I think he is. If not, we'll be ready to pull out when Feeney's shot is heard. But he'll take the cash. During the night I heard him pulling the nails that hold the button tight on that lower drawer. And he's down there now—packing the camera with the banknotes, I'd say."

"Then we've got him!" declared Hervant. "When I told him he could leave Feeney behind, he backed off. If he'd said he would leave the prisoner, you'd had to go ashore with Kendler and finish him off yourself. But the damned fool tells me that Feeney would carry the stuff!"

He laughed lightly, and with satisfaction, at the humorous aspect of the situation.

"I've just been thinking," said Bentley, "what we could do about Feeney after he comes back aboard with the camera. You remarked to me the other day that the planter here has the power to arrest and hold for the coast guard anybody who commits a crime on this island."

"Yep," said Hervant. "That's right. But we don't want Feeney arrested, do we?"

"I'm not sure on that point. After we've got the money, I might go ashore and tip Scudder to arrest Feeney for killing Kendler. It would be an easy way to get rid of him."

"You ain't got the right slant," said the skipper. "Feeney'd be likely to spill things on you—how you give him the gun and all. And he knows the money angle, too. If he didn't know what was in that camery, we might chance havin' him arrested. But you lay off any idea like that."

Hervant was very earnest, and a little worried that Bentley would get on dangerous ground.

BUT BENTLEY understood the danger of his new project.

"No, we can't risk anything there. If Feeney got it into his head I'd crossed him—and he would—Scudder would be in the know on everything. We'd have to kill Scudder, too."

"We got to take Feeney along and drop him somewhere else." declared Hervant. "But he ought to bury Kendler," he added.

"Oh, he will," said Bentley. "He spoke of that himself. He says he'll pick his spot for the job where there's good cover, and not too far from the beach. And he said not to worry if there was delay after the shot—that he might want to wait until dark before he came back aboard."

"He knows his business, don't he!"

"He certainly does. But one point worries him. He says a shot on this island will make a devil of a noise."

Hervant thought a minute.

"We'll have to do somethin' about it," he conceded. "You tip him off that I'll stand by with one of the rifles, and when we hear his shot, I'll fire the rifle two or three times, with a gap between the shots. If Scudder looks over this way when he hears Feeney's shot, why, he'll see that we're shootin' from the schooner. He'll think we're just gunnin' for sport."

"That's the idea," said Bentley. "Might be wise to fire a shot after Kendler's out of sight ashore."

"No; that might start Scudder lookin' this way. We don't want to start nothin' until Feeney's finished things."

"Skipper, you're pretty good. You think of what I don't."

"Well, I know about what to do around these islands. But if it hadn't been for you, I'd never guessed Kendler had all that money along with him."

Bentley signed that it would not be wise to go on with the subject. Hervant began to busy himself looking around the decks. He ordered the *serang* to get out a bundle of oakum and the calking tools.

Bentley remained at the rail until the breakfast gong sounded. Then they both dropped below and found Kendler already at the table, drinking his coffee.

"Say, ain't you afraid to take that man ashore?" asked Hervant. "You better keep them handcuffs on him, anyhow."

"You can be sure I'll take no chances with him," said Kendler. "Not only will he wear his cuffs, but I'll keep the long chain on him. Besides, I'll always make him walk in front and carry my camera and boxes. And—" he paused and blinked at Hervant, with a smile —"I've got a protector with me." He lifted the side of his white coat and revealed a revolver butt protruding from a trouser pocket. "And," he added, "this bamboo cane of mine is weighted with lead."

"I'm glad you're playin' on the safe side," said the skipper.

"I'm afraid Mr. Scudder will be alarmed when I appear at his door with a man chained to me," remarked Kendler.

"Sort of a dancin' bear." Hervant laughed. "But you'll find Scudder's all right. Likes visitors. He'll prob'ly want you to stay overnight. I'll be here most of tomorrow, so you stay if you want to. I'll be along about dark for a chin-chin."

"I wouldn't want to stay overnight. I'd be worried about Feeney."

Bentley held Hervant's eye for a couple of seconds. Kendler went on—

"I presume you'll prefer not to travel with me, seeing that I'm taking my prisoner, Mr. Bentley."

"I don't mind that," said Bentley. "But I'd prefer to go ashore later."

Kendler stood up.

"I'm ready to go any time. I'll wait until you've finished breakfast, Captain."

"You can leave now," said Hervant.

He went part way up the companion, stuck his head out and ordered the *serang* to lower away the dinghy, with two of the crew to row.

Kendler left the little messroom and went aft to the main cabin. A rattling of chains told that Feeney was being taken from his room. He was heard entering Kendler's room, where the camera plate holders were slung from his shoulders.

Feeney leading the way, Kendler holding the chain behind, and the prisoner carrying the big camera in his arms, they passed through the messroom. Feeney gave Bentley a significant glance. A slight bulge under the prisoner's arm told Bentley that the automatic pistol was carefully concealed beneath Feeney's striped seersucker coat.

Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, Hervant went on deck to see the boat away.

"Give my regards to Scudder," he called.

Kendler waved a hand. The native rowers shoved off, headed for the beach five hundred yards away.

Hervant went below.

"That's about the last of him," he remarked. "And we ought to show a good profit on this mornin's work. We're ready to sail at any minute."

"All we need is that dough," said Bentley, and leaned back against the bulkhead to finish his morning smoke.

"There ain't nothin' that takes the place of brains," said Hervant, and grinned at himself in the little mirror over the wash basin.

IV

SHIMMERING heat waves rose from the blue mirror of the lagoon. Captain Hervant, a rifle close at hand, paced the quarterdeck of the *Sultana* and scanned the shore where Kendler and Feeney had landed.

Sweat ran down the lines of his face. He walked back and forth, keeping within the shadow of the tarpaulin which had been stretched over the mizzen boom for an awning. He sucked at a dead cigar. His lips moved with silent swearing.

Bentley lay back in a canvas chair, his shirt open, the strings of his shoes loosened, his hair wet and dripping. He was worn out from looking ashore. His eyes were shut against the glare of sun and water outside the awning.

Hervant stopped suddenly at the companion hood. He craned his neck to look down at the alarm clock, which, when at sea, gave the helmsman the time for striking the bells.

"Here it is damned near noon and not a sound from ashore!" fumed Hervant. "And you said that Feeney could slip that chain of his'n at any minute."

Bentley moved languidly.

"Don't blame me because we've heard nothing," he grumbled. He, too, was out of patience.

"Why not blame you?" demanded Hervant. "Somethin' has been bungled, ain't it? What was the good of Feeney waitin' this long?"

"I'll leave it to Feeney to decide," said Bentley. "He's no beginner at his business."

"He's a damned fool to wait this long to kill Kendler."

"If he's delayed, it's because Feeney's wise enough to wait for things to fall right for him."

"Fall right my eye!" said Hervant. "What's to stop him doin' the job when he got into the brush after leavin' here? And we sittin' waitin' in the heat!"

"Perhaps he met somebody—he and Kendler. That man Scudder might have come along."

Hervant pondered.

"Mebbe you're right. Just the same, Scudder wouldn't be walkin' around. He's got one of them egg beater engines you hang on the back of a boat. He'd come grindin' hisself out here with that."

"Perhaps they ran into a flock of natives," persisted Bentley.

"They run into somethin' or other. It was near seven when they got ashore," Hervant complained. "Four hours and a half—or better—and not a sound. He could've killed a dozen men in that time."

"I'm betting on Feeney," Bentley insisted in a tired voice. "Everything was set. And Feeney's a gunman. He'd bump Kendler off without thinking twice about it—unless something was in the way that made it smarter to hold fire."

"You bet on who you damned please. Take that other rifle—we're goin' ashore." Hervant's voice was decisive.

"Ashore? What'll we do ashore?" demanded Bentley, getting to his feet, startled by Hervant's tone and action.

The skipper picked up his rifle and slipped the lanyard of the binoculars over his head.

"I don't know. Feeney may be hurt. Kendler might've noticed the gun under the prisoner's arm, and took it away from him—or bashed him on the head with that loaded cane. Somethin's gone wrong. We can't waste no more time. Kendler may be at Scudder's by now."

Hervant moved to the break of the deck and ordered the *serang* to man the boat overside.

"I'm afraid myself that something's wrong," admitted Bentley, as he picked up the other rifle. "And it'd be a mistake to let Kendler get to Scudder and tell him that I'm suspected, as he told you last night. I told Feeney to take any chances against letting Kendler say anything against me to anybody—to be sure and get him before that."

They went down the ladder into the boat. The brown seamen started rowing for shore. It was decided to beach where Kendler and Feeney landed and follow along the trail through the jungle.

But it was Bentley's idea that it would be better to go straight to the plantation bungalow. If Scudder had seen nothing of the two men, then they might be picked up on the way back along the jungle trail.

Captain Hervant overruled that plan.

"When Scudder sees our rifles, even if he don't know nothin' about the men what's come ashore, he'll be suspicious of us. And if we start along the back trail from his house, he'll most likely come along with us. We wouldn't have no chance then to help Feeney get Kendler, if we was needed to do it. And if Scudder'd git to talkin' with Kendler, everything we've worked out so far would go to pieces."

Bentley agreed that landing on the beach was wiser. They reached the shore and found the tracks where the missing pair had moved across the dry sand to enter the line of palms nearest the water.

Hervant ordered the boat to wait until they had explored a little. He turned his binoculars along the shore, searching for any sign of the missing men. He found nothing.

"Come on, now!" said the skipper irritably, as he stood ankle deep in the hot sand and coral dust. "We got to git off this blazin' beach. If we don't catch 'em in the jungle, and have to keep right on to Scudder's house, we'll find that Feeney has messed things up."

THEY pushed into the bush and found the trail. It was hard, broken coral, partially overgrown by vines. Still, Bentley was not satisfied.

"I tell you, Cap," he insisted, "we're going to make a mistake if we try to catch 'em on this jungle path. We can't see the lagoon from here. And we can't see the shore, either. If Feeney should want to get in touch with us, and appeared anywhere on that lagoon shore expecting help from us, he'd be in a pickle to get back to the schooner. He might be chased by some of Scudder's natives; they might have seen him kill Kendler; they might've run into his body—and Scudder himself might be after Feeney. You'd want to be able to pick Feeney up in a hurry and make a getaway."

Hervant took off his cap and wiped his face.

"Damned if you ain't right. We got to knock around in the boat and keep watch of the shore. We might have to row clean over to Scudder's place. Remember, in that case, I'm just polin' around with a passenger to give him a little sport with a rifle. That'll account for us bein' armed if Scudder ain't seen the other two. But don't you say to Scudder that we been shootin' sea gulls, or he'll take your hide off. He likes to keep these gulls here on the island, and don't want 'em scared away." He lifted his rifle and fired into the air.

Gulls rose, screaming. The crew of the *Sultana* could be heard chattering, alarmed because the skipper had fired his rifle. The boatmen were frightened until they saw Hervant and Bentley come out of the jungle.

Hervant ordered the boat rowed along the lagoon shore, in the direction of the distant sheds, keeping about fifty feet off the sandy shingle.

"If Feeney is running with that camera and the other things, the nearer we are to the plantation the less distance he'll have to make to meet us," Bentley pointed out.

The captain turned his binoculars toward the plantation, studying the groves and splitting yards.

But it was Bentley, using his naked eyes, who caught something moving near the sheds.

"Hey, Skipper—Two men! Just at the left of that whitewashed tree close to the big brown roof!"

Hervant swung his glasses on the spot. The moving figures eluded him.

"White men!" he exclaimed. "I lost 'em!" But he picked them up again with the glasses—and gave a gasp of astonishment.

"Who are they?" asked Bentley, wildly eager.

"I don't know—yet," answered Hervant.

He kept the glasses to his eyes, and again caught the moving figures among the trees. The reflected light from the surface of the lagoon, the sweat in his eyes, the motion of the boat, all hampered his vision in the brief glimpses he caught of the two men.

"Is Scudder there?" asked Bentley.

"Scudder—yes. And I'd say—that the man with him is—Feeney! I can make out the stripes on his seersucker coat!"

"Feeney—with Scudder! What the devil does that mean?"

"Hell's fire!" exploded Hervant.."Scudder's drivin' Feeney along ahead of him—up to the bungalow! I saw the handcuffs glitter!"

Bentley caught his breath in a swift gasp.

"Can you beat it! Scudder has nabbed him! And that lets us in for trouble here, Skipper."

"I thought that guy had some sense," said Hervant. "To go and let a little counter-jumper out of a bank—"

"Oh, he killed Kendler, no fear of that," broke in Bentley. "What's on my mind is that if Scudder finds the camera is full of money, we've got to get Scudder."

Hervant lowered his glasses and made a face.

"There wan't no shot fired," he objected. "Been better if Feeney'd made a quick job. And mebbe Kendler ain't dead. Feeney, with a gun, had no business to let Scudder grab him."

Bentley considered a minute.

"Feeney was wiser not to shoot at the planter, knowing we'd come for him—and the camera. He expects us to get him out of Scudder's hands."

"And I'll git him, too," said Hervant. "I got a right to the prisoner—even if the killin' was ashore—because it was my passenger what was bumped off."

"Skipper, you're talking sense! The Sydney police have the first claim on Feeney for the bank murder, and he goes with us!"

"My job is to deliver Feeney in Sydney," asserted Hervant, his aggression growing as he saw his arguments prepared by Bentley. "I'm responsible to my owners, and the S'pore police, and nobody can git around them points. Scudder'll see that Feeney's my meat."

"Well, if he doesn't see it by talk, we'll show him just what the bore of a rifle barrel looks like," said Bentley.

Hervant ordered the sailors to row at top speed for the landing float near the plantation copra sheds.

V

WITHIN an hour the *Sultana's* boat was approaching the copra sheds. The sun beat down mercilessly, but Hervant and Bentley endured the heat without comment. They discussed every possible point which might arise in their dealing with Scudder.

At last, the boat alongside a float of coconut logs, the two white men landed, carrying their rifles. Only a few natives were moving in the distant splitting yards. But, against the usual custom, there was nobody at the float to greet the visiting boat. Ordinarily Scudder would be there.

Hervant looked about him, peering up into the groves, scanning the sides of the sheds.

"We better head up for the house. But we'll have to be careful what we say—until we know just what Feeney's handed the planter."

They hurried through the palms, struck a hard path which had small gardens on each side, entered an embowered avenue with high leafy trees almost meeting overhead. It was among these trees that Hervant had lost sight of Scudder and Feeney. And only a few yards ahead the wide veranda with its shady gloom marked the location of the plantation bungalow.

Hervant paused at the bottom of the high steps. The house appeared to be deserted. If any one was inside, the person did not appear to be aware of the fact that there were visitors.

"We'd better call out," suggested Bentley in a low tone.

"Hello, there!" shouted the captain. "Hey, Scudder!"

A young man appeared in the open doorway, then stepped forward across the wide matting. He wore short khaki trousers, a shirt which lacked sleeves, and a helmet. A revolver in a holster hung from a cartridge belt about his waist.

"Hello yourself, Cap!" retorted he. Noting the rifles, he grinned. "You seem to be looking for somebody."

"We are, Scudder. Couple of people left the schooner this mornin', and we don't know just what's up."

Scudder tilted his helmet back on his head, becoming serious. He was not more than twenty-five. His wet hair was dark brown, and his skin was tanned to the hue of a native. His teeth and eyes looked strangely white in contrast with the darkness of his skin.

"Queer passengers, if you have to chase 'em with rifles," said Scudder. He motioned the men up the steps.

Hervant hesitated a minute before making the ascent. He had a small towel in his pocket, and used it as a handkerchief to wipe his face. It puzzled him that Scudder had not made some mention of having seen anybody from the *Sultana*. The fact that Feeney had been captured, and that the young planter seemed reluctant to report the happening at once, filled Hervant with dismay. It crossed his mind that he would need to move with caution.

"I brought Mr. Bentley here along with me," said Hervant, without moving. He jerked his head toward his companion. "I didn't know what I'd have to do—kind of a special case, yes. I didn't want to leave you to handle things alone, if anything went wrong."

Scudder nodded to Bentley.

"You're both welcome."

"You ain't seen anybody, have you?" Hervant asked finally.

"Yes, I have," replied Scudder.

"Both of 'em?" asked the captain.

"Both of 'em, and I've got one."

Hervant stiffened in pretended amazement.

"Got one!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by that?"

"He killed that man with him, and I'm holding him for murder."

"My God! Kendler murdered!" cried Bentley in mock horror.

"If he had only listened to us when we told him not to go ashore with that prisoner!"

"That feller you've got," exclaimed Hervant, "he's wanted for robbery and murder in Sydney. He's the gunman what robbed a bank."

"Yes, I understand as much, having looked over the papers he had in his pockets—stolen from the dead man. Feeney was just about to take his handcuffs off when I grabbed him hiding in the brush not far from the copra sheds."

"He must've got one of Kendler's guns and shot him," said Bentley.

"No," said Scudder. "He killed Kendler with a heavy bamboo cane, which I found was loaded with lead. I was destroying an ant hill with Pengulu, one of my Malays, and we heard a cry. I was too late to be of any help—except to catch Feeney."

"Well, you've saved me a heap of trouble," declared Hervant.

"A frightful tragedy!" said Bentley. "But Mr. Kendler was not at all capable of coping with such a desperate criminal."

"I didn't realize what a chance I was taking until I found, by letters and other documents, that I had the American gunman," said Scudder.

"Especially," said Bentley, craftily, "as the prisoner must've had by then the revolver and the automatic pistol which Mr. Kendler carried."

"ONE of the two guns was jammed," said Scudder. "But that was a discovery that I did not make at once. Anyhow, he was too surprised to do much when I told him to throw up his hands."

"As Captain Hervant has said," Bentley went on, "you've saved him a lot of trouble. Otherwise, we'd had the job on our hands of catching Feeney. Nat-

urally, the skipper doesn't want to have to report to the Sydney police that he's lost the prisoner, as well as having to report that Mr. Kendler's been murdered. It would sound like negligence or something."

"Oh, I got to land him in Sydney," said Hervant. "Bad enough as it is. I'd feel pretty cheap not to hand Feeney over to the police."

"You won't have any more trouble with the man, I can assure you, Cap. I'll hold him for the coast guard." Scudder spoke quietly.

"Hey?" Hervant lifted himself forward in the chair he had just taken. "You'll hold him? Why, what about me? I'm responsible for—"

"Your responsibility," said Scudder, "was for something different—and only as a master of a vessel. But there was a murder committed on this island, and—"

"That's all right!" broke in Hervant heatedly. "But it was my passenger he killed, so—"

"Now, now!" interrupted Bentley swiftly, lifting a hand. He held the captain's eye. "It makes little difference. The main thing is that the authorities get the prisoner. Mr. Scudder may see it your way after he's heard all about it. Let's get at some of the facts—and be reasonable."

"Sure! I'm willin' to be reasonable," said Hervant, taking the hint that Bentley wanted to avoid an argument.

"Where's—the body?" asked Bentley.

"Down at the copra sheds. I had some natives bring it in from the bush."

"Did he have a chance to say anything?" inquired Bentley, with appropriate softness.

"No; no, he was dead. Probably died without knowing what hit him."

Bentley dropped back in his chair, showing every sign of being greatly shocked.

"If he had only taken my advice, and waited to come ashore with the skipper and myself."

"I don't see yet," said Scudder, "how he could have disarmed his— What did you say the name was?"

"Kendler," said Hervant.

"Yes, Kendler," Scudder resumed. "Kendler was careless."

Bentley leaned forward.

"Now—his effects. Did you find anything—some plate boxes, a camera?"

"Yes; I have those inside," said Scudder. "They were with Feeney where he was hiding."

Bentley leaned back in his chair with a sigh of relief. He looked at Hervant.

"I can take them off your hands," he remarked. "His relations will want—"

"Where's the prisoner now?" broke in Bentley.

"He's been having a meal at the back of the living room, with Pengulu keeping an eye on him."

"A desperate man, like him, might get away from a Malay boy," cautioned Bentley, as he followed Hervant up to the veranda.

Scudder laughed lightly.

"Feeney is roped to a heavy teakwood chair that two men couldn't lift. Besides, he still has his handcuffs on. Of course, I don't trust the cuffs, because somehow he had got hold of a file. I believe he had already been to my machine shop and stolen it. The long chain had the link at each cuff filed so it could be slipped. That left him with his hands free, but with a bracelet on each wrist. As I told you before, when I came on him, he was just about to use the handcuff keys he had taken from the dead man."

"You'll need to take every precaution you can," said Bentley. "Until Captain Hervant has him in irons in the hold, nobody is safe. You're mighty lucky that the *Sultana* will get him off your hands, you being the only white man here."

"I'm not afraid of him," said Scudder. "Come on inside and see if he'll talk. So far, he has refused to say a word, except that Captain Hervant will come for him."

The skipper and Bentley left their rifles against the railing and followed

Scudder into the great living room, which was protected from the glare of the sun by great *kajangs* of split bamboo.

When their eyes had become accustomed to the dimness, they made out the figure of the prisoner in the darkest corner of the room. His shoulders were bound to a gigantic chair of carved teak, visible because of the light seersucker coat he was wearing.

Bentley gave a cry of bewilderment at what he saw.

"That ain't Feeney!" yelled Hervant. "That's Mr. Kendler!"

"I'M VERY much relieved that you've come, Captain Hervant," said Kendler.

His voice was weak, and smears on his face showed that he had engaged in a struggle. His coat—which was Feeney's seersucker garment—was torn, and there were reddish stains on the front of his white silk shirt.

"What's that you said?" demanded Scudder. "This man is not Feeney?"

"Hell, no!" roared Hervant. "You've made a mistake!"

"This is the man who had Feeney a prisoner!" exclaimed Bentley.

"But this man was handcuffed," insisted the planter. "And the dead man had documents in his pockets showing that he was taking a bank robber back to Sydney for—"

"He thinks I'm Feeney," broke in Kendler wearily, "because he caught me just after I'd killed Feeney. I've had a terrible morning. Feeney grabbed me before I knew what was happening, got the keys to the handcuffs and put them on me. He stripped my pockets of all my documents, and made me change coats with him. Then he replaced the chain. He was going to kill me, and wanted anybody who found my body to believe that the Sydney bank robber was the dead man. I pretended to faint after the struggle, got a hand on my heavy bamboo cane and killed him. I was caught before I could unlock the handcuffs.

"And now, Mr. Scudder, I hope you're convinced that you're not holding prisoner a bank robber." Kendler smiled weakly.

"Of all the damned messes for you to be in, Mr. Kendler!" exclaimed Hervant.

Bentley, grasping the fact that there should be no difficulty in getting Kendler and the money back aboard the *Sultana*, waved a hand at Scudder.

"Of course! No more trouble for you, Mr. Scudder. Kendler can come back with us. He killed an escaping prisoner—that's no crime. He had a right to shoot Feeney."

"Self-defense," put in Hervant. "Mr. Kendler wouldn't ha' killed that man 'thout he had to."

"What you say is mighty important," said Scudder in a relieved voice. "I had to arrest him, self-defense or no. The dead man had the documents of authority on his person."

"You was right," commended Hervant. "Nothin' else to do but arrest a handcuffed man who'd just killed somebody. But you don't have to hold him for the coast guard now that we're here to—"

"I'm not so sure of that," broke in Scudder. "I'll have to make a report, and I can't take the responsibility of letting a handcuffed man—who has admitted the killing—sail away with you."

Captain Hervant swung on the planter and roared with rising fury:

"Now don't go hog wild just because you've got a little police authority! That man—Mr. Kendler—ain't lawfully held. He's my passenger. And you can see from his documents that he's got temporary police power on this trip to Sydney. Police in S'pore explained that to me when he come aboard with that Feeney. And as we've already been sayin' to you, Mr. Kendler had a right to kill an escapin' prisoner—and escapin' from a man with police power for the trip. It's just like he attacked a regular officer tryin' to git away."

"I agree with you," admitted Scudder. "Provided this man is not really Feeney."

Hervant leaned back, the better to glare indignantly at the young planter.

"What'n hell's your game? You in-

sultin' us two by hintin' that we're tryin' to help a bank robber escape?"

"No intention to insult at all," retorted Scudder. "I'm a young man, trusted by the government, and my property and concession here depend upon not spoiling my record."

"Your responsibility ends with me," declared Hervant importantly, his rage turning to bluster. "You never met this other passenger of mine, Mr. Bentley, but you know me. And my word—I'll put it in writin' if you want—as master of the *Sultana*, puts the responsibility on my shoulders."

"No doubt that would be good enough for the coast guard," said Scudder, a little reluctantly.

Captain Hervant pressed his advantage.

"You're damned whistlin' it's good enough! What's more, I'm goin' to *make* it good enough." He turned to Bentley. "Bring them rifles in!"

Bentley stepped back to the veranda. When he returned, he handed one of the weapons to the captain.

"Don't go to extremes, Captain Hervant," pleaded Kendler in an alarmed voice. "It's sufficient that you identify me with Mr. Scudder."

"I don't need nobody to tell me what to do," said Hervant curtly.

"Bringing those rifles into my house might be something in the nature of a threat," said Scudder. "I don't like your attitude. However, if you insist that I turn my prisoner over—"

Captain Hervant broke in abruptly and loudly.

"Mr. Kendler's fare was paid to Sydney—by the police. It's my business to take him where he wants to go."

He crooked his left arm and swung the rifle barrel up to it, holding the stock with his right hand, a thumb on the hammer.

SCUDDER observed that Bentley was also holding his rifle so as to have it ready for use. The young planter showed his chagrin.

"You may be right," said Scudder. "Anyhow, I'm not going to resist two armed men. You win, Captain. Mr. Kendler, as you call him, can go on to Sydney in your custody. I pass the responsibility to you—as I presume I legally can."

"Oh, don't start talkin' like a lawyer!" snorted Hervant. "We know you're educated. I'm no fool, if I ain't a dude."

"You've convinced me that your passenger can go, that's all," said Scudder. "Your argument is sound, and your manner convincing—especially the rifles."

"I guess you know who's bossin' this job," sneered Hervant. "Kendler comes with me."

"He can go if he likes," said Scudder.

"Mr. Kendler, where's your camera—and the plate holders?" asked Bentley.

Scudder said—

"I'll get 'em."

He moved through a door leading into a room at the right, and came back with the big camera. He then brought out the plate holders, piling everything on the table.

Hervant leaned his rifle against the wall.

"No need to bother you no more, Scudder. I'll untie him. He ain't goin' to be a prisoner no more. I'll file them cuffs off if I have to, back aboard the *Sultana*."

He started toward Kendler.

"I'm not going back aboard your schooner," protested Kendler.

The captain stopped in his tracks.

"Hey?"

"I can decide what I'll do," insisted Kendler. "And I don't have to go back if I don't want to."

"What the hell ails you, anyway?" demanded Hervant. "We take the trouble to come here when you're in a jam, and you—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Mr. Kendler," said Bentley. "If you stay you'll be kept a prisoner—perhaps for weeks—and when the coast guard cutter comes you'll be taken aboard in chains. You know how unreasonable this planter can be—has been—with you."

"Just the same, I'm going to stay here," said Kendler firmly.

"And he will, if he wants to," declared Scudder. "But, I'll tell you what you can do for me, Skipper. It may be weeks before a cutter arrives, and I want you to make a report for me in Sydney. So I wish you'd deliver the documents I found on the dead man to the police, as well as the camera and plate holders."

Bentley, overjoyed at this turn of luck, hastened to be agreeable before the astounded captain could blunder into some remark which might change the situation again.

"I think you're very sensible, Mr. Scudder," he declared. "And your decision is fair to everybody. You can understand that Captain Hervant's attitude has been in the interests of his passenger. As Mr. Kendler prefers to stay, that is satisfactory to all of us. And you, Captain Hervant, certainly you will gladly cooperate with Mr. Scudder and the authorities in Sydney." He smiled on the captain.

"Why, yes," agreed Hervant. "Mr. Bentley, you took the words outen my mouth. If Mr. Kendler don't want to come back aboard the schooner, he has the say-so, and I'm the last man to want to argue with him. You see, Mr. Kendler, I was expectin' all the time that what you wanted to do was come back with us, and I was in a cross sea, as the sayin' is, when you kicked."

"That's all right," said Kendler. "Mr. Scudder will treat me fairly, now that I've been properly identified. He sees that I'm not a dangerous man."

"Then there's no more use in wasting time," said Bentley. "I can carry the camera and holders."

He moved to the table and slipped his fingers under one of the straps.

Scudder swiftly stepped between Kendler and Hervant. His right hand was on the butt of his holstered revolver.

"Just let that camera stay there for a minute," he ordered, sharply.

Startled by the command, Bentley turned back to look at the planter.

"What's wrong now?" he demanded.

"I've decided that if Kendler stays here, his stuff stays, too. Everything, including the prisoner, had better be turned over to the coast guard."

Hervant gave a snort of disgust.

"You beat hell! There ain't nothin' but pictures he took here in that—"

Bentley waved a warning hand at the skipper.

"Let that point pass. It's none of our business what's in that camera—it makes no difference to us."

"It makes a difference to me," said Scudder.

"What difference could it possibly make?" asked Bentley. "The pictures taken here—"

"I'm suspicious," snapped Scudder.

"Suspicious of what?" asked Bentley.

"Of what's in that camera."

Kendler spoke up.

"There are nothing but exposed plates, Mr. Scudder. Nothing that has any bearing on Feeney—and I hope you won't let the light in on the plates in the camera. Please don't destroy the beautiful shots I got this morning ashore."

"I'm not suspicious of you, Mr. Kendler," said Scudder. "But something is wrong. Captain Hervant doesn't really care what becomes of you, as long as he gets hold of the camera. I told him he could take the camera with him, just to see him—and Bentley—change tunes. And I'm going to find out what's inside your camera, even if I ruin your exposed plates." He moved toward the table.

HERVANT thrust out an arm as a barrier against Scudder's progress.

"You just stay where you are, Scudder!" he commanded.

Scudder paused; he stared at the skipper.

"You dare to tell me what I shall do in my own house?"

"You just said we didn't want Kendler, but the camery," said Hervant. "I'm goin' to show you just how bad we want Kendler with us. And your house or not,

I've had enough of your high hat just because you got a little tin horn authority around this island. You listen at me. I'm goin' to take Kendler—camery and all! You understand that?"

"Now you're talking!" said Bentley. "And we'll have no more argument about—"

Bentley broke off. He threw his head back, and his mouth opened in astonishment that turned him speechless. He had seen something move at the half open door of a room which was behind Scudder.

What Bentley saw was a man's feet coming through a partly open *kajang*, which opened into the smaller room.

Feeney stepped into the living room. He had the gun which Bentley had provided aboard the schooner.

Scudder, catching the queer expression on Bentley's face, turned—and looked into the muzzle of Feeney's automatic pistol.

"You said it!" growled Feeney, covering the planter. "No more argument is right, Bentley. I'll look after this guy. You, Scudder, stick your hands up—quick and high!"

The planter obeyed. He had no chance to draw the revolver from the holster on his hip.

"Feeney!" cried Captain Hervant. "Alive—with a gun!"

"For the love of Pete, kid!" yelled Bentley joyfully. "We thought Kendler had slugged you with that loaded cane of his!"

"He give me an awful wallop, yes," said Feeney. "It was after I'd grabbed him, put the bracelets on him, had his coat on me and mine on him, and his papers in my pocket. About the time I come to from the jolt he give me, he was runnin' away without stoppin' to take the bracelets off. That was O.K. for me—him in handcuffs, and his papers in my pocket. I laid still. I'd got a glim of this baby of a planter—and Kendler was caught by him. There was blood on my face. They thought I was croaked, and some natives rolled me in an old sail and put me in a shed. I saw you two show up, and I've been listenin' outside for a chance to buy a stack of chips here. This is the gun you give me; Kendler had two of 'em on him."

Bentley's joy vanished. He scowled.

"You didn't need to crack about where you got that gat."

"What harm?" asked Feeney. "Your shirt is out around here."

"It wasn't before. Now we'll have to kill two—" He stopped.

"We'll kill three. Scudder, Kendler and the skipper."

"The skipper is in with us," said Bentley.

Feeney showed his surprise.

"Then we kill two, hey?"

"No; we don't need to kill Kendler, here," said Hervant, as he laid his rifle against the wall. "We can take him back aboard. I'll see to that part of it. Bentley, you git the cash. Feeney, you wait until we've got to the boat. Don't shoot until you're ready to run, or you'll have the Malay house boys after you."

"I can attend to this planter guy, don't you worry," said Feeney. "You see the cash goes along."

Bentley turned swiftly for the camera. He opened a side panel and pulled out some packets of banknotes. Hastily inspecting the inside of the camera, he stuffed the notes back into place.

"It's all here," he reported. "Hurry, Skipper! Fetch Kendler!"

Hervant reached forward to untie the ropes of the bound man. But Kendler rose straight up—and the chair did not lift with him! His cuffed hands moved swiftly. He thrust a revolver into the captain's face.

"Put your hands up—and don't you move 'em!"

Kendler's command to Captain Hervant shook with determination. The mild little man spoke in a way that showed he would be dangerous if there was any delay in carrying out his order.

Bentley's body froze. He had seen Kendler's amazing action. It seemed incredible that a man bound to a chair could rise, the ropes still about his shoul-

ders; that a prisoner could flash a revolver regardless of handcuffs.

Captain Hervant, his eyes fascinated by the ring of the revolver muzzle in Kendler's hand, could do but one thing—and that he did without thought; he threw up his hands.

Bentley was about to spring at Kendler, when something else happened. Feeney moved past Scudder, no longer holding the planter covered with the gun. In the belief that Feeney was about to disarm Kendler, Bentley was taken wholly unaware himself. He found himself staring into the barrel of Feeney's gun—the very gun which he had given the fellow aboard the *Sultana*.

"You bat an eye," said Feeney to Bentley, "and I'll give you everything in this gat of yours. You know how many cartridges it holds, so be good."

BENTLEY'S only reply was to hold up his hands. He had no doubt that he and Hervant had walked into a trap. How and why did not matter to Bentley at that moment. Nothing was working right, for he saw Scudder's holstered revolver come out. As the planter stood behind Feeney now, it seemed reasonable enough to Bentley that Scudder should shoot Feeney. His mind caught a vision of Captain Hervant, Scudder and himself dealing with Kendler after the planter killed Feeney.

But Scudder did not shoot. Instead, he stood with his weapon ready to fire in any other direction than Feeney.

Hervant was the first to find his tongue.

"There's somethin' wrong," he growled. "Kendler wasn't tied to that chair!"

"You've a brain like a bear trap," said Bentley.

"What're you pointin' that at me for, Kendler?" Hervant asked in a complaining whimper.

Before Kendler could answer, Scudder gave a sharp whistle.

From the door to the back porch, and from rooms to the right, five Malays stepped into the living room. They were all armed with naked *parangs*.

"Mr. Bentley, step over into that corner. And you follow him, Captain Hervant. Start anything, and you're dead men. These natives will hack you to death if I say one word,"

Bentley was the first to obey the planter's order. Hervant, swearing under his breath, followed, still too puzzled at what had happened to make any objection. The natives herded them along, and stood behind them with blades ready for action.

"What's the big idea?" asked Bentley.

"You're both under arrest," said Scudder.

"What's the charge?" demanded Bentley.

"Conspiracy, attempted robbery and attempted murder," said the young planter.

Bentley laughed scoffingly and was about to speak; but Hervant began to bluster—

"I had a right to take that passenger, Kendler, along with—"

"And leave Feeney here to shoot me, also," said Scudder. He turned his eyes on Bentley. "You armed a prisoner on board the *Sultana*."

"Prove something!" cried Bentley. "My word is as good as the prisoner's. And why don't you arrest *him*?" He pointed at Feeney.

"If you knew the answer, you wouldn't be where you are now," retorted Scudder. "And I don't have to take anybody's word for what happened here. You made up your minds to incriminate yourselves, and you did a good job of work."

"So the bank robber's playing in with the law—turning king's evidence to get a light rap, is he?" asked Bentley. "If you think, Scudder, that you can hold me for anything that happened ashore here before I arrived—or after—you've got another guess coming."

"I heard you tell Feeney that, because he'd mentioned how he got his gun from you, I had to be killed. And I heard Captain Hervant tell Feeney not to shoot

me until you'd reached the boats with the camera full of money."

"This ain't no time to shoot off your face, Bentley," cautioned Hervant.

"Besides," Scudder went on. "you don't know what happened ashore before you arrived. Seeing you two arrive with rifles, I made you believe that Feeney was dead. You didn't care who was dead, or what happened to Kendler, if you got the cash. But I'm going to let Mr. Kendler tell you two how wise you are—*not*."

"You read in the Straits *Times* of Singapore, Mr. Bentley, that Feeney, the American gunman, was being sent back to Australia?" Kendler asked.

"Don't try to kid me," growled Bentley. "Everybody knew that in S'pore."

"I could have taken him back on a steamer," said Kendler, "but four of his gang are still at large. I could have been killed on a steamer by some of Feeney's friends—or he might have been killed for the special purpose of keeping his mouth shut. His gang knows that he has been doing what you Americans call splitting on them. They want to kill him, naturally."

"He's a pretty good hand at doublecrossing," said Bentley, his eyes boring into Feeney, who stood beside Scudder. "Now that he's going to the side of the law, he's likely to tell anything on anybody. But he knows what squealers get."

"The news got out," Kendler went on, "that Feeney had sailed in my custody aboard the *Sultana*. But the schooner was delayed, and when the article appeared in the paper, instead of being safely out to sea, the *Sultana* was still at anchor in Singapore Roads. And I have an idea, Mr. Bentley, that by a little inside information—probably from Captain Hervant—you knew you could catch the *Sultana* as a passenger. Anyhow, you came aboard just a few minutes before we did sail."

"You can have any opinion you want—if you prove it," said Bentley.

"That goes for me too," said Hervant.

"Of course, I knew at once that you did not belong to Feeney's gang," Kendler went on. "You appeared to be an ordinary passenger. As it turned out later, you must have suspected that I had Feeney's loot with me. As I've already told Mr. Scudder I suspected you from the first, Bentley. You began to make friends with my prisoner—slyly. But your plan to get the cash could not be worked out until you were sure I had it with me.

"I put the cash in a drawer, nailed the button, knowing you could find it when the chance offered. I made it my business to give you the chance. You searched my room, and then you gave my prisoner a file and a gun. Using a faked leak in the schooner for excuse, you figured he would have a chance to go ashore with me—for murder and robbery."

"You can't make that stand up in court," scoffed Bentley. "A convict's testimony is no good in—"

"I don't need a convict's testimony," said Kendler. "Nor does Mr. Scudder. As he has said, both of you incriminated yourselves. You thought there were sixty thousand pounds, or about three hundred thousand American dollars, in my cabin. As a matter of fact, I've only got about forty thousand dollars with me in that camera. And that money was insured by the bank, because while it's evidence against Feeney, there was a chance it might be lost if the *Sultana* was wrecked. And it's all Feeney had with him when he was arrested, though the police gave out to the newspapers that he had what you call three hundred thousand dollars. That was done to make Feeney's gang believe that he had not divided the loot fairly, and avoid any chance of having them help him escape on his way back to Australia."

"You're a good deal of a liar, as well as a doublecrosser, ain't you Feeney?" said Bentley.

But Feeney only smiled.

Kendler took off his handcuffs.

"You are still a little in the dark, Bentley," said Kendler. "You are not talking to Feeney."

"The hell he ain't Feeney!" cried Bentley.

"The prisoner chained up in the cabin aboard the *Sultana*—the young man here who was brought aboard the *Sultana* by the police in S'pore—is a young American employed in the branch bank as an armed guard. He served two purposes on this trip. One was to guard me and the money, the other was to impersonate Feeney for police purposes. The real Feeney is still in jail in Singapore."

Hervant turned to Bentley.

"And you think you got brains!"

"You needed a few brains yourself, Captain," said Kendler. "Last night, when I told you I had no confidence in Bentley, I knew you were pretending to be an honest man. I knew I was expected to go ashore with the supposed Feeney; I knew I was safer before we got away if I pretended to have confidence in you; and I knew perfectly well that you knew I had the money in the camera. As to that, I know nothing about photography; the camera was merely a receptacle for the banknotes. And you mustn't blame Bentley too much. He could have no idea that my chained prisoner would inform me at once of Bentley's plot—that he could slip his handcuffs at any time—was well armed all along.

"Of course, we walked straight to Mr. Scudder's house this morning and told him everything. We hoped that you would sail away. When we saw you coming with rifles, we knew there would be trouble. We could have prevented you landing. But he wanted a good reason for arresting both of you, and observe your performance in trying to get my cash.

"Personally, I'm opposed to bloodshed. I've won several medals for target work with a pistol. That's why the bank picked me to take the cash to Sydney. And as for the young man you thought to be Feeney, he's deadly with a gun . . . I think that's about all, Mr. Scudder."

The mild little man smiled at the planter.

Scudder nodded, then addressed the tallest of the armed Malays.

"Pengulu, take these men to the godown and chain them to a log. Put watchers over them. They are coast guard cargo, come the next cutter."

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of *Adventure* published twice a month at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1930. State of New York, county of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Fred Lewis, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Treasurer of The Butterick Publishing Company, publisher of *Adventure*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Butterick Publishing Company, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City. Editor, A. A. Proctor, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City. Managing Editor, Victor Weybright, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City. Business Managers, None. 2. That the owner is: The Butterick Publishing Company, a corporation, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City, whose stockholder is: The Butterick Company, a corporation, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City, whose stockholders are: J. S. Bache & Co., 42 Broadway, New York City, Charles D. Barney & Co, 65 Broadway, New York City, John P. Bayle, c/o Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, New York City, H. Earl Hoover, 8 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois, Hurley & Co., 55 Wall Street, New York City, John J. Johnston, c/o Continental Illinois Bank & Trust Co., Chicago, Illinois, F. B. Keech & Co., 52 Broadway, New York City. Stanley R. Latshaw, Butterick Building, 161 Sixth Ave., New York City, Merrick Co., c/o Customers Securities Dept., The New York Trust Co., 100 Broadway, New York City, Jas. A. Moore, 300 Park Avenue, New York City, Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, New York City, E. A. Pierce & Co., 11 Wall St., New York City, Samuel Schwarz, 18 Renner Ave., Newark, New Jersey, Shearson Hammill & Co., 71 Broadway, New York City, John W. Linkler, c/o Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, New York City, Webb Walker, Medical Arts Building, Ft. Worth, Texas, Warwick Corporation, 224 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: The Prudence Company, Inc., 331 Madison Avenue, New York City, (Holder of mortgage on real property). 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. Fred Lewis, Treasurer. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1930. Chappell Cory, Jr., Notary Public, New York County; County Clerk's No. 202, Reg. No. 2-C-359; Kings County Clerk's No. 174, Reg. No. 2208. (My commission expires March 30, 1932. [*Seal*]—Form 3526—Ed. 1924.)

WHERE LIES THE WEST

By RAYMOND S. SPEARS

THE WEST is a vast region. It comprises the western two-thirds of the Mississippi Basin—Texas, which is more than five times the size of New York State, and the eastern slopes of the Rockies—and the wonderlands between the Continental Divide and the crest of the Sierra Nevadas, down to the Pacific Coast.

If one sits down in the Bad Lands at a Dakota nester's cabin of the old days, an old Swede or a lank New Englander or a Dutchman will in characteristic lingo discourse on exactly such things as one reads about in the fascinating Western fiction of the period. One hears about the big outfit which brought in a hundred bulls to breed up the old gaunt, long horned range stock. A bunch of cattle herding over abandoned homesteads may actually be tended by old-time long riders now on their good behavior. But the crippled up has-beens—good bad ones or former law upholders—are apt to be found tending machines as they limp around in the pulp and paper mills in the East.

I don't know why old time bandits and bad men retire to the paper mills, unless it is because the odors are fragrant, with a tang of sulphur process. I do know that a good friend of mine who wandered through Japan, hunted cattle thieves in Nevada and served as an aviator during the war—when he was away over age but didn't look it—was a paper maker in upper New York State.

One day this fellow strolled into the gunstore kept by another friend of mine, Charlie Maltby. Extending a regulation .45 blue barreled Colt toward Charlie, he inquired—

"What's the matter with that?"

As Charlie reached to take the gun, the butt flipped over and the muzzle prodded Charlie just below the breastbone. Charlie grunted.

Thus introduced, the man became our wonder and our delight. This in the Mohawk Valley. He gave us such a breathing spell of the Old West, of the year before and years on end before that, as to reveal how close the West may be to each and all of us, whether under Massachusetts elms or California Coastal live oaks. My suggestion is that the West may be a state of mind liable to occur to any one anywhere.

And certainly the prowess of most great Westerners was begun when they were boys in staid Eastern communities. Good marksmanship acquired with a .22 caliber rifle is as effective in New England as in Wyoming. And it takes no more skill to rope a dog in Denver or Cheyenne than it does in Boston or on Staten Island. And one can imagine the astonishment of a widehat in Colorado Springs upon discovering that an exquisite from Buffalo or Philadelphia actually knows how to bluff a pair of three spots into the semblance of four aces—and then some. There are plenty of feats which the East and the West have in common.

The best coming-and-going rifle shot I ever knew began as a boy to kill deer in the Adirondacks. He bought a .22 special repeater when around twenty years of age and shot it some thousands of times, every whack with meticulous care. He could shoot flying grouse and deer in the heart or—incredible as it sounds—in the head when they were running in the brush. And I knew him to kill a grouse frightened

from a low evergreen tree by moonlight. Had he drifted West he easily might have become one of the deadliest of the bad men, for he had the habit of thought fitting him for such a career. He remained a woodsman, however.

Practise to become a Westerner, a wildcrafter of the open regions, is worth undertaking. But the motives had better be examined pretty closely. There are Western ideals which stand four square in any code of honor imaginable. There is a give and take among supreme men of ideals anywhere which means the greatness of civilization. The West declares, for example, that a man must stand on his own merits, that he must be brave, that he must be skilled in his specialties and that he must be truthful and of few words. At the same time, the renegades have left their impression on the Border from the days when the fearless fugitives from Virginia and Carolina contempt settled Kentucky. When the Ohio Valley grew too law abiding and honest, the criminals moved farther westward. And whether it was Wheeling or Maysville or Virginia City or Lewiston, there was a period when the outlaws upheld the scoundrel's code of depravity and strength—till honest newcomers gained control. And the lynchers had in turn to yield to the law and order of organized administrations. And frequently and, in fact, generally, the ebbs of shame in public opinion ran between the flood tides of honest practises.

If we examine the Western States one by one today, we shall find no lack of interesting conditions. One can find practises as amusing, as dismaying, as idealistic, as crude as ever in those terrific periods of old times. I went West on my first trip, sighing because the Old West was dead. I arrived in a rousing, hustling, realty depression community and one of the foremost citizens remarked to me that he reckoned I had expected to find those parts wild and woolly.

"No, sir," he assured me. "We've been going for years now and never had a man killed within the corporate limits."

"How about that fellow they found dead above the railroad tracks?" prompted a bystander in the effort to be absolutely honest with a trustful stranger.

"No, sir," my informant rebuked. "He was outside the city. The railroad's the city line."

But the young fellow working in the garage casually mentioned that there had been nine cases of homicide considered in the spring term of the county court. My own upper New York State county went twenty years without a case of homicide, with a population not much less than that of the whole State of Nevada. Years later I chanced to learn that during my stop there I was residing with sundry of the members of the largest and most capable outlaw band the West ever knew. They were on their good behavior, suspecting me of being a detective keeping tabs on them. My innocence was so perfect that when I learned the truth about those genial good fellows I gasped. And I still am amazed.

The West requires a certain degree of intelligence and information to appreciate it. The casual tourist hastens across the wastes and he stops in the camp grounds. His eyes are dimmed by the unaccustomed brilliance of the sun on the landscape. Alkali cuts his skin. He comes to hunt a hole at night alongside a ranch fence or in a place especially prepared for him.

My son used to mourn the population which had overrun the earth. There were no more vacant spaces. He knew that in regions the human average was less than one to the square mile. He did not grasp the significance of this fact till he had rolled and rocked over fifty or sixty miles of main transcontinental trail—the Lincoln Highway—between, not towns, but ranches; and there must be some places of ten thousand square miles where there is not one human being. Elbow room, surely! The great vacancies within our own country are standing invitations to the youngsters whose instincts lure them to the out-yonders to do their own things in their own ways.

WATER in gushing brooks or runs or branches down the gullies of the Appalachians is so plentiful that we hardly appreciate it. I remember particularly a two-inch pipeline under a hundred-foot head beside the doorway of the greatest green timber trapper I ever knew. It came from a boiling sand spring. He had a dozen such for his cows. He had five acres of strawberries. He had four-hundred and fifty acres of mountain slope where luscious berries ran wild. At that time there were more than twenty thousand abandoned farms on the brims looking down into the valleys of the Hudson and other New York rivers. One dipped his cup into enough water to irrigate a thousand acres and to supply ten thousand head of cattle just to take an unappreciated drink. And so through New England and Pennsylvania and into the high adventure regions below the Ohio and Potomac. When I bought water full of salt to fill my radiator at a well in the edge of the Carson Sink, and the stuff rested in balls, oblate spheroids like mercury on my tongue, I looked around at these desert dwellers, and then at the enormous vacancies of salt flat and cloudburst gashed ranges sparkling in the crystalline sky.

Why had these very men sought this terrific terrain, abandoning the fruit without equal in flavor for the canned tomato and the meager contents of thick bottled, cold drinks?

Elbow room, freedom from master minds, escape from conventions and people to interfere with one's own affairs—these are one phase. But I know there are silent poets and artists who never touch a pencil, and nature lovers who lay waste the living things, wondering why the blood letting has so little joy in it. People kill wild life without reasoning and they bother one another without intention.

"Mind your own business!" the West says.

And yet, in every community meddlers and snarlers and natural busybodies are permitted to go swaggering up and down with their bullying and their strange ideas, trying to force everybody else to conform to their instincts. And so, every once in awhile, if we watch the tiny news items closely, we come upon incidents which are the direct inheritance of those old traditional days when men were men, as the saying is.

Right now, if we go into some communities, we hear people talk about the old times, when things were rough. They still are proud in places of the swindles which sold bare desert to newcomers, the old game of realty grabbing harking back to the time when Daniel Boone was himself kicked off the farm in the land he had discovered. One goes into a bank and the note teller informs him that reputations don't pay mortgages, while on the Atlantic Coast—which I've actually heard a real estate barker call "obsolescent"—the great fiduciary institutions refuse to deal with any people except those who have established their good names by probity and worth.

There is a line about two-thirds of the way across Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas west of which lies the West. In Oklahoma the divide between the East and the West comes sharply down the Arkansas River and joins against the South near the Arkansas State line. This West-South boundary goes through, say, Texarkana, at the moment one of the most interesting of communities. And East Texas, with its pines, is fascinating. Texas unites the South with the West. And the Texas Ranger is the Western equivalent of the Pennsylvania and New York State Police.

The Gulf Coast is Western, as well as Southern. Any one who crosses that line and drives a few thousand miles circling around from the salt grass of Texas to the passes over the Rockies and takes pains really to know locales and people and places will not talk about the Old West being dead. And there are odd centers, as in the East, which are worth studying. But it takes time and genuine mental effort to know what is the West of our dreams.

Part II

KING *of the* WORLD

By TALBOT MUNDY

Author of "Om" and "The Soul of a Regiment"

JAMES SCHUYLER GRIM, known at earth's four corners as Jimgrim, Jeff Ramsden, one-eighth of a metric ton of bone and muscle, and I, Major Robert Crosby, were a part of the nondescript crowd that saw the French cruiser explode in a geyser of flame and steel in Marseilles harbor. And in that awful instant we forgot the Arab sea-dog who had tried to stab Grim a moment before.

"Too bad," the Arab had remarked when Jeff grabbed his knife hand. "It would have saved you from a worse fate, Jimgrim. Dorje . . ."

Following Grim to the prefect of police's office we found Meldrum Strange, that eccentric billionaire whose money bags and nose for prying had got him in bad with half the world's governments. Strange was beside himself—exploded at Grim's entrance.

"Dorje's man!" cried he upon hearing of the attempted murder. "And the cruiser—that was Dorje's work, too. Grim, I won't take no for an answer. You have a chance to scotch the foulest plot against civilization since the dawn of time!"

"Dorje?" prompted Grim.

"A half mad inventive genius who plans to become King of the World!"

Alone a moment later, busy on an account of what I had seen that morning, I looked up to discover a gorgeously gowned woman entering, unannounced.

"I am the Princess Baltis, Jeemgreem!" she cried dramatically in answer to my look of surprise. And with that, thinking me Grim, she launched into a mad story of our past lives; how we had worked to-

gether in other incarnations . . . "You must come to me, Jeemgreem—" she gave me an address. "Solomon is coming to be King of the World—and his name is Dorje!"

But Baltis was forgotten in the madness that followed. A piece of brass tubing, an item from the cargo of "scrap brass" known to have mysteriously disappeared from the Arab's boat, was brought in to the prefect. He switched on a light—and for the first time we learned the nature of the invention by which Dorje meant to become King of the World. An energy converter of some sort, with the flow of the electric current, every cartridge in the building went off, the desk fell in ashes, and the tube itself disappeared!

"Battleships, arsenals, armies!" cried Strange. "What could they do against this?"

It was then that Grim spoke.

"I'll take this case, Strange," he said briefly.

At Grim's suggestion I went with Ramsden to Baltis' apartment. By chance I discovered the place to be a trap; the house was filled with armed men. But through a spy-hole in the wall I saw Grim follow me in a little later to take up the game in his own identity.

While Baltis' men were being led out by police, the prefect himself appeared in the door with a message for Grim. It was from Strange.

"My office in Geneva with all records has been destroyed by fire of an unknown origin. Dorje again! The loss is irreparable. What are we to do next?"

I RETURNED to my observation post. Through the open window we could hear newsboys announcing at the top of their lungs special editions about the warship disaster. It seemed to me highly improbable that the prefect would remain indefinitely in the corridor while excitement in the streets gained headway, and since he knew about that spy-hole he might wish to signal to us through it—perhaps to beckon me outside for instructions. However, he was betraying no impatience, beyond that he glanced once or twice at his watch; he sat examining his notebook, rocking his chair on two legs, tapping his teeth with a pencil.

"Princess—". Grim seemed to have made his mind up what to do, and I think she realized it because her attitude became vaguely less relaxed and insolent—"if I wished to get you out of the way, I would not take the trouble to bring you to trial. I don't understand French criminal procedure, and I do understand that you have what is known in the United States as 'pull'. But a pull on a trigger—you understand me?"

"You would shoot me? You have not the disposition. You are too moral. I am not in the least disturbed about your shooting me."

I thought, and I could tell by his face that Jeff did too, that Grim had gone off on the wrong foot. Certainly the princess thought so. She looked triumphant again, and rather scornful. Grim looked at his wits' end—and as if he were trying to hide the fact.

"I don't have to pull triggers," said Grim. "There are plenty of others who would do that quite cheerfully. I have decided, however, to save your life—on conditions."

"You? Save *my* life? You are crazy! I do not need to move in order to kill all three of you this instant!"

"So I thought," said Grim. "Let's settle that first. Jeff, do you mind watching her while I—"

He turned his back to her and walked toward the south wall of the room, the wall that she sat facing. He had been able to watch her eyes from where he was sitting; she had glanced in that direction once or twice too often and too obviously carelessly to escape Grim's omnivorous eye for detail. I watched her face while Grim walked straight toward the wall. She and I appreciated at the same moment that Grim, by talking like a mere dime novel blowhard, had tempted her to crow, and sneer—and give away a secret that she would have given perhaps all she had to keep from him.

"Stop!" she said. "I surrender. What do you wish me to do?"

However, Grim went forward. There was a mirror facing him—one of those half globular abominations in a gilt frame that distort whatever is reflected in them. He had raised his hand to feel the panel on the wall beside it, when the wall moved—outward, toward him. There was a secret door there. To protect himself he stepped behind it as it swung open Out came three men, one an officer in uniform. They were armed, or at any rate one of them was; I could see the bulge of a revolver on his hip. Grim glanced at me.

"*Vache!*"

I think the officer in uniform said that, but it may have been one of the others. I was on my way to the door. I opened it and beckoned the prefect, who summoned the man who was searching bedrooms. The two came and stood in the doorway, the prefect smiling to himself and the other man making a rather nervous exhibition of his automatic.

"Colonel Zalinsky," said the prefect. "Monsieur Albertini, Monsieur Hugo—you are under arrest. Colonel Zalinsky, you will receive an escort to the barracks. Monsieur Albertini, Monsieur Hugo, you will accompany me."

He approached the two men in civilian clothes and asked them for their weapons, speaking to them very civilly. They hesitated, glancing at the colonel, who merely scowled and scratched at his mustache; so they handed them over—two pistols—and

the prefect laid them on a settee. Jeff unloaded them. The prefect went to the secret door and opened it wide; there was a nicely ventilated closet in there, provided with a window in the outer wall and with a cushioned bench that could have seated half a dozen people. He examined the place and then ordered his man to make use of the phone in the corridor.

"Request a prisoner's escort for Colonel Zalinsky, who is under arrest."

Then Grim, with a gleam in his eyes that always reminds me of John Paul Jones' retort, "I haven't started yet!" approached the princess.

"Did I understand you correctly to say you surrender?" he asked.

"I did not say that. If you had stopped, yes. But you did not."

"Very well then, go with these men. *Monsieur le préfet*, I regret that I can be of no more service to you. It appears I was mistaken when I said that the Princess Baltis, who is so notoriously of the secret service, probably was employing her talents to uncover a grave conspiracy. Knowing how a secret service sometimes operates without taking the local police into confidence, I presumed on your very flattering familiarity with my record, and you were kind enough to permit me to ascertain whether or not the princess is on the same dangerous and important mission as myself. I have even presumed to send a telegram to Paris to a certain Major Bonfils, with whom I have worked in Syria. I have put him to the inconvenience of traveling here by airplane, and I shall have to apologize to him also."

He was talking, rather obviously, to give the princess time to think; and she was thinking furiously, behind an almost Chinese mask of inscrutability. Colonel Zalinsky glared at her, his lips moving, but no word coming forth; the sort of threats that he intended would be, in any event, more convincing if suggested. Spoken words so often steal the thunder of a thought. The other two men scowled and tried to whisper to each other, but the prefect courteously stepped between them.

"Of what am I accused?" Zalinsky demanded suddenly, and Albertini echoed him, "We, also—we demand to know that!"

"Of conspiracy against the Republic," said the prefect. "And of acts of commission and of omission that were contributory to the explosion on the cruiser *L'Orient*."

"Ludicrous!" Zalinsky looked maliciously relieved. "You have not one scrap of evidence. Who accuses me?"

But his relief was shortlived. Grim's acid had eaten through the immense assurance of the Princess Baltis. Even in defeat, however, she was debonair and changed sides with the gesture of a reigning beauty bestowing prizes at a carnival:

"*Moi, j'accuse!*" Then, in rapid French that was very difficult for me to follow, "it is true, and this Jeemgreem is altogether too astute! I have brought these traitors to the door of justice—and, I suppose, those others also, who were out there. You have arrested them, yes? I have wormed my way into their confidence, and I will tell all I know. Nevertheless, I assure you that this Jeemgreem by impetuously interfering has upset many calculations and has brought exposure too soon. You have caught moths—flies; eagles you have let go. Wolves—lions—tigers remain at liberty! I am forbidden to name the source of my instructions, but you forced me to speak! If you had arrested me—*mon dieu!*—that would have given warning to so many people, that—"

There was a knock at the door. The prefect's man opened it.

"Major Bonfils."

The Princess Baltis stood stock-still. I watched her closely, and neither her face nor her eyes showed the least trace of emotion. She even breathed steadily. But it is hardly an exaggeration to say that there vibrated from her something like the magnetism of a leopard that sees sudden danger.

CHAPTER VII

"No longer No. 17?"

I CAN READ and write French fluently; and I can speak it so that Frenchmen understand me when they genuinely try, which is not often. But to follow closely a four cornered, quick fire exchange of verbal thrust and counter-thrust, interspersed with professional argot and the latest idioms and catch words, is beyond my powers. So I can only give a résumé of what happened after Bonfils came in, and the greater part of it is summarized from scraps of Grim's subsequent conversation. Jeff talks better French than I do, but even Jeff was a bit bewildered by the speed, and it took both of us weeks to extract all the details, as a rule one detail at a time, from Grim, who can be as laconic as a stone jug and who hardly ever fully realizes that others are not so quick as himself to pick the fine points from a maze of irrelevant suggestions, hints and purposely confused statements of probable fact.

Looking back, it is easy enough to summarize. The main point was, that the Princess Baltis, having thoroughly established herself in the confidence of the French secret service, had done what almost all spies do eventually, and that Bonfils knew she had been playing false. But it was also true that she knew a lot too much about too many important people; and in peace time it is no simple matter to dispose of any one intrenched in that position, since a secret service never courts publicity and, ever since the Dreyfus scandal, the French have been particularly touchy on that point.

But there was another complication. Bonfils and Grim had been intimate friends and they had helped each other in the Near East, although employed by mutually suspicious governments. They understood each other's methods almost perfectly, and Bonfils knew that Grim has very little personal use for nationalism. Bonfils, as a Frenchman, would have liked to see France recognized as the paramount power in the world, and he habitually employed his talents toward that end.

Grim—a citizen of the United States, ex-major in the British army, decorated by five governments and trusted, as a rule, by all of them—has never had the slightest interest in what he calls "parish pump politics," and rather agrees with Doctor Johnson of dictionary fame that patriotism is the last resource of the scoundrel. Grim is the deadly enemy of so-called patriots who ruin other countries that their own may flourish, and then rob their own for the sake of self-importance. He holds that vice and virtue know no boundaries, but that the world is at the mercy of the ignorant, who think they do. He also holds that in all countries, at all times, there are conscienceless individuals, possessed of a certain psychic sense, who understand how to manipulate crowd-opinion and who never hesitate to do so, in order to make brave and decent men act damnably in the name of patriotic commonsense.

So Grim is not easy to deal with, from the point of view of a secret service bent on snatching credit for itself and for its own nationals. But, on the other hand, Grim was already involved; he understood the situation of the Princess Baltis; he already knew the nature of the problem to be tackled; and his first words, in French, as Bonfils entered the room, amounted, in the circumstances, to a statement of his intention not to expose the princess but to use her as an ally—subject, of course, to Bonfils' approval.

"Congratulate the princess. She has netted a few of the small fry very neatly. She offers now to help us catch the big ones. Can you spare her?"

Bonfils smiled engagingly. He was a rather small man with a big man's shoulders and a poet's way of using them, so that one word conveyed an essay on things unsaid.

"Cordially!"

Bonfils' smile had malice—meant for the princess, and she knew it; however, he had the subtle courtesy to pretend it

was meant for Zalinsky. He turned it on all three prisoners, and the two civilians looked embarrassed, but Zalinsky showed his teeth under the long mustache that almost hid the ferocity of a telltale upper lip. I did not catch Zalinsky's words; he spoke *sotto voce* and extremely rapidly; but it was a threat, as obviously as a rattler's warning is. I learned from Grim, that evening, that what it amounted to was a promise to create a much worse scandal than the *affaire* Dreyfus. Bonfils made no audible answer. Then the military escort came; Zalinsky was informed that an auto awaited him; he swaggered off; and hardly sixty seconds after that the two civilians were not so courteously hustled downstairs to a motor van provided by the prefect.

THEN the fun began—genuine fun, in which Bonfils vied with Grim, and the prefect competed with both of them, in efforts to force the Princess Baltis so to compromise herself that she would never be able again to escape from the toils they intend to weave around her. And she broke their toils as swiftly as they wove. She was like Penelope, who baffled all the suitors in Odysseus' absence. It was surprising that she did not claim to have been Penelope in a previous life, but that was about the only argument she did not use; and probably the only reason why she did not use it was that it would have suggested Dorje as Odysseus and herself as being faithful to him.

Taxed with having admitted to Grim, and to Jeff and myself, her sympathy for Dorje and her complicity in Dorje's plans, she retorted reasonably that she had supposed we were Dorje's agents and that she had therefore assumed that attitude in order to tempt us to trust her and reveal Dorje's secrets. How should she know we were authorized agents of the French government? And since we were nothing of the kind it was obviously impossible to find fault with her for not knowing it.

Besides, were we not intimates of Meldrum Strange? And had not she herself been sent by Bonfils to extract from Strange's files a document considered scandalously anti-French? If Strange was an abominable person, why were we, his self-confessed friends, not equally fit subjects for her genius, forever ready as it was to labor diligently for the sake of the Republic?

Taxed with interference without orders into an intrigue that she had neglected even to mention to her superiors, she retorted with the most marvelously impudent alibi that even a secret service ever listened to. She hinted—so adroitly that she avoided compromising herself, and yet, so convincingly that the thrust went straight home—that the secret service itself had been corrupted by Dorje's agents, so that she had not felt justified in making a report until she knew to whom it could be made without risk of playing into Dorje's hands.

She herself turned cross-examiner. Did Bonfils not know—or had he not at least suspected for two or three years that some one by the name of Dorje was attempting to destroy civilization in order to get the entire world into his own control? Did he or did he not know it? If he did not, what kind of an espionage officer did he consider himself? If he had known it all along, by what right had he virtually shelved herself, who had never failed him? Why had he not at once sent for her and assigned her to a task for which she was much better fitted than any one else in the service? And since he had not sent for her, was she not justified in wondering whether he, too, had been won over by Dorje's agents?

Bonfils told her why she had been dropped from the list of active agents during the past year or so.

"You are too notorious. Too many people recognize you. To employ you is to advertise that we are conducting an investigation."

She exploded; ridiculed him, mocked him.

"Nevertheless, you have the impudence to tell me that I worked without your

knowledge? If I am so obvious to other people, how is it that you say you did not know I had employed myself in this *affaire* Dorje? Furthermore, was it not you yourself who embraced me and commended me because, in the *affaire* Habibullah, I acted without waiting for orders? My friend, you are inconsistent."

She put up an equally vivid defense against the prefect's charge that she had guilty knowledge of the presence in Marseilles of those strange instruments that did such damage. Had she warned him, he could have possessed them before they were distributed and hidden. She accused the prefect of having interfered and ruined her last chance of discovering what had become of that shipment of "scrap brass". She almost blamed him for the warship disaster; she entirely blamed him for the fire at the prefecture that had destroyed so many valuable records.

"You, too! Do you dare to say you did not know me? After what has been said by Major Bonfils, have you the effrontery to declare that you did not suspect me of being engaged on an *affaire* outside your province, in which it would be an impertinence for you to interfere unless invited? Why did you not consult me? Why did you not assure yourself before you came crashing into my delicate plans, with your long nose and your big feet and your drove of idiots whom it pleases your conceit to call detectives?"

BONFILS had hardly hinted at a tenth of one per cent. of what he knew; but then, neither had she. And what both of them knew, in addition to numberless dangerous secrets, was that Dorje's scope was world-wide; he was not in France or even on French territory; no pursuit of him, no check on him was possible without cooperation among many nations, difficult to attain in principle and much more difficult to put in practise. Every possible weapon would have to be used against him. To throw her into the discard might prove fatal to success, as well as disastrous to dozens of people whose secrets she knew. She led her ace, defiantly:

"*Et-fin—s'il vous plaît, me mettez aux arrêts!*"

"You insist?" asked Bonfils, coolly enough; he was not easily bluffed into showing his hand.

"Why not? You accuse me. You insult me. You invade my domicile. You have submitted me to forcible detention in my own chair while you amuse yourselves at peep holes. Then let *l'affaire* Dorje wait while you prefer proper charges against me—in secret. My improper friends will have the impropriety to disregard the secrecy; but what does it matter who else is implicated, or on whose neck falls the ax, provided No. 17 is punished for the crime of having acted without orders from those who had condemned her to inactivity and oblivion, not—no, no, not from jealousy—but because she had served France too often and too well!"

It was a masterpiece. It would have been a simple matter for the authorities to accuse her of treason and try her in secret. But if, as she suggested, she had friends who would avenge her by revealing scandals, of which every government on earth has plenty that it would be suicidal to make public, then Bonfils was in a predicament. And she was right, too, about the paramount importance of a campaign against Dorje. If Dorje was what he appeared to be, then her own importance could be measured solely by the value of the information she could produce against him, no matter what her own previous complicity might have been. The question was, could she—would she betray Dorje? Was she any longer to be trusted?

With an eloquent motion of eyes and shoulders Bonfils beckoned the prefect and Grim outside into the corridor for a consultation, leaving Jeff and me to watch the princess. I was feeling a bit irritated by her remarks about me, so I kept my distance. On the contrary, Jeff

seemed to have enjoyed her criticism; he urged her to be seated and himself sat for the first time, facing her near the open window. Jeff is the last man in the world whom one would suspect of delicate intuition, but as a matter of fact he helps Grim far more by his diplomatic skill than by his physical strength and courage, which are sometimes a source of embarrassment. Unerringly he had spotted the lady's weakness, although I don't know how. Perhaps his own prodigious loyalty to Grim enabled him to do it, since loyalty—like love between a man and a woman—is a spiritual force that stirs and strengthens understanding.

"Would you like a tip from me?" he asked her.

I was standing where I could see her very clearly in the bright light from the window. For the first time, I thought she showed genuine terror, although she did her utmost to conceal it. Jeff exudes good nature. It had touched her, and like an animal at bay she saw an opening but suspected it because it looked too opportune. Jeff looked almost too guileless.

"Advice costs the giver nothing, but when was it not expensive to take?" she retorted.

"You're right. I wouldn't take advice from you," said Jeff, "if it cost me a fortune not to. But I thought you might be more astute than I am."

"That is quite true. I am more astute than you are."

But Jeff appeared to have lost all interest.

"Then you don't need my advice," he answered.

"Tch! You talk like a woman. What is it? If I listen to you, need I do what you say?"

"I have changed my mind," Jeff answered. "Why should I advise you?"

"Because I ask it! Are you so ungallant that you can see me, in what must look to you like an extremity, and yet withhold from me whatever you think might help me?"

"It was a mere idea," said Jeff.

"Ideas are the source of actions. Tell me then, what is it?"

"Put your faith in Grim, that's all. Fool anybody else, but don't play tricks with him; there's neither fun nor money in it."

"Pooh! You think your Jeemgreem is a paragon perhaps—a re-incarnation of all the strength of all his former lives, and all the weaknesses forgotten? A dangerous man to deceive?"

"I don't have to think about that," said Jeff. "I know it."

THAT was a typical Jeff Ramsden statement. His modesty about himself is almost mulish; no success convinces him that he is more than a quite ordinary person possessed of unusual physical strength; but when he praises Grim he has no more use for modesty than a buffalo has for a bicycle. However, underneath exaggeration, Jeff moves subtly toward his objective; he was aiming at her strangely erroneous fixed idea that Jimgrim packs a deadly species of malice among his equipment. And even I, who am not a connoisseur of such matters, could guess that she, to put it mildly, had not yet dismissed the desire, and perhaps the intention, to make Grim love her. She was not by many a dozen the first ambitious woman to conceive that plan, or something like it.

"Bah! He hates me," she said suddenly.

"I never knew him to hate any one," Jeff answered. "Grim likes people. That's why he understands 'em. That's why the worst crooks trust him."

"Yes, and then he betrays them to the police."

Jeff laughed.

"I have seen Grim eat with murderers and sleep with rebels. He doesn't consider it his business to bring them to justice. He stops their little games. He gives the inherent decency in human nature a chance to come through, and I'll bet you Grim has saved more criminals from gun and gallows than any other ten

men living. But he can protect himself—none better."

"Then you advise me I should trust him?"

Jeff nodded.

"Those who do have found it profitable. Those who don't—"

I don't think he intended to finish the sentence anyhow, but Grim came in then, leaving the door slightly ajar, and we could hear Bonfils and the prefect talking rather noisily in the corridor. I think the princess was intended to understand that neither Bonfils nor the prefect had an ear to a keyhole. Grim walked straight up to her.

"You'll have to go to Paris," he said, offering her a cigaret and lighting hers and his with one match. "A lot depends on you, of course, but probably they'll overlook things if you undertake to help us run down Dorje. You will leave by plane, this afternoon, with Bonfils."

For as long as sixty seconds they looked into each other's eyes and neither spoke. Then Grim said:

"Dorje has lost the fight on this front. Nobody knows yet where the rest of those brass gadgets are, but they'll be traced. You can probably help. I advise you to give them a list of every one you know who is in sympathy with Dorje or in any way connected with him."

"But I have no list," she answered.

"All right, tell the names you can remember. After that, your usefulness in France is at an end; and even if it weren't you would be shot or stabbed as an informer. So you join my crew and work with me. Is that agreeable?"

"You mean—you send me against Dorje?"

"No. I will lead you against him."

"Jeemgreem, if I swear to you—"

He interrupted, flicking the ash from his cigaret. "Oaths," he remarked, "are ashes—of emotion. Nobody was ever bound by one. A fellow does things, or he doesn't: it depends on the fellow himself. Dorje probably will do his best to scupper you for having joined us, but you must take your chance of that. We shall all be taking chances."

"Jeemgreem, do you realize—what terr-r-iffic chances?"

"Probably not. Thank heaven, few of us do realize the long odds that we're up against or most of us would quit before the game starts. But let me make a few points just a mite clearer to you."

I was afraid he was going to threaten her. She was just of the type that instantly responds to threats by seeming acquiescence and by secretly swearing to teach the threatener a lesson. She, too, thought he was about to threaten and her face assumed a sweetness that disguised a very different emotion. But Grim took us all by surprise.

"I know that Dorje has the jump on us, and that it is going to be very difficult to checkmate him. I regard you as the most important member of my crew. I'm going to have to look to you for information and advice. I can't waste time mistrusting you. You will find when you reach Paris that a body not unlike yours has been found in the river, removed to the morgue and identified as that of the Princess Baltis. There will be a verdict of suicide—a verdict comprehensible to any one who knows anything about your recent doings. It may possibly reach Dorje's ears. Let's hope so. It releases you from momentary danger, and it saves the faces of the authorities who might have a hard time otherwise in explaining to one another why you are not under close arrest. You are dead. You are no longer the Princess Baltis."

"Am I not—no longer No. 17?"

"No number. Find a new name. Get a passport—Bonfils will attend to that. Meet me in Cairo at Brown's Hotel."

"You leave at once?"

"No. But you do. They won't want you in Paris a minute longer than they have to keep you there. Go straight to Cairo, hold your tongue, and wait for me."

He took no notice of her excitement; she was as breathless as a caught fish. He turned to Jeff and, taking Jeff's arm, walked to where I was standing.

"You two fellows mind going to Cairo? I'll take Meldrum to London. In the

plane I'll have time to talk some sense into him. Whoever gets to Cairo first waits for the rest. Are we all agreed? Then so long." Suddenly he turned toward the Princess Baltis. "Madame Anonyme—*au revoir. J'espère que vous êtes bien réencarnée encore une fois.*"

"Jeemgreem," she retorted, "*vous êtes incroyable. Mais, je commence de le croire, quand-même que tout le monde le dit!*"

CHAPTER VIII

"She is not lethargic like a cobra!"

"AM MOST absqueamious *babu.*" It was a full, rich baritone, outside the door of Jeff's bedroom in Brown's Hotel. I did not recognize the voice, but evidently Jeff did.

"You fat rogue, come on in. I'm glad to see you."

I followed, having fretted for more than a week in Cairo with nothing to do except wonder what was keeping Grim in London. Jeff had remained almost incommunicado all that time, because people know him and they know that where he is Grim will presently appear. He preferred not to answer questions. People don't know me, so I had wandered about a bit; but I don't care much for Cairo or tourists, and I had not gone far for fear of missing Grim's arrival, so I was rather naturally bored.

"Am squeamish, so absteem from politics—verb very sap. This *babu* greets you, sahib. You should see my passport. Red ink, green ink, certifying me as almost abstract personage, so guileless and incompetent—so useless as to be above suspicion. Let me show you."

"Damn your passport. You may have forged it for all I know, and who cares? Why are you here?"

"Jimgrim cabled me from London one word—Cairo. Here I am, delivered right side up, in one piece. What next?"

He was wearing a black alpaca jacket and beneath that the rather sketchy orthodox Bengali costume that revealed enormous, hairy legs. He was immensely fat. His feet were incased in new red Damascus slippers, which he kicked off as he passed the threshold. He had a huge head and large, alert brown eyes, that viewed me with suspicion. Jeff introduced him—

"*Babu* Chullunder Ghose — an old friend."

I had heard of him. Who has not, who has heard of Jeff and Grim? But it seemed incredible that this mountain of obesity could be the brave man who had scaled the passes into Tibet and had brought Jeff's journal back with him. He looked incapable of walking five miles. He was sweating and his feet looked fat and useless. But he was a good looking man, with a buttery ivory skin and rather heavy jaws black shaded with the roots of whiskers.

"No use asking how you are," said Jeff. "You're broke, of course, but otherwise—"

"Am worse than broke. Am indigent."

"But otherwise top-chop. What's going on in India?"

"Simonization process, sahib. Spraying worn out car of Juggernaut with juice of observation made by Royal Commission. Have you ever seen an old Ford held together by the new paint? Let us hope much. Let us not be too prophetic. Did you mention whisky?"

Jeff ordered drinks. Chullunder Ghose sat cross legged on Jeff's writing table like a big, fat Buddha. Rolling his handkerchief into a ball he tossed and caught it in his bare toes. I decided that his feet were neither fat nor useless.

"How did you get here?" Jeff asked.

"Flew. Never again! This belly of mine contains no gyroscope. Lost one stone, five pounds, seven ounces. During a number of hours lost also all belief in Providence, under whatever name. Nevertheless, recovered somewhat after landing. But I still need whisky."

"How did you find me?"

"Came here first, naturally; Rammy sahib's habits are as spots on leopard—changeless. Clerk at desk, without look-

ing in register, said no Jeff Ramsden staying here. Damn liar! Had you not been here, he would have looked in register. I told him greatest art is lying; therefore he should marry and study art. He told a Sudanese to show me to the front door, but I had already seen that. So, since they would not let me use the elevator; and since I had seen a letter addressed to you in a pigeon hole numbered 118, I walked upstairs. In all the universe, I wonder, is there any sweeter music than the melody of cracked ice in a tall glass? Strange, that whisky should be vilified by almost all religions except this *babu's*. Am hedonist, with epicurean tendencies. After you, sahib. Yes, please—just above the pretty—quite a bit above it; and now fill her up—ah! Sahibs, may the world not lack the crazy men we need to keep us crazy also!"

THAT was talk. He only sipped his whisky, eyeing me over the top of the glass. He seemed to be waiting for Jeff to hint I might be trusted, before asking questions that perhaps I had no right to hear.

"Jeff, sahib, did you ever almost die of curiosity?" he asked at last.

"Don't doubt I died of it lots of times," Jeff answered. "That's what kills us all and gets us born again. Crosby is curious too. He'll listen in."

The *babu* bowed in my direction with the gesture of a Buddha bestowing benizon.

"Am flattered. May your honor not regret same. Who is the Princess Chalawan de Sitlab en Siam?"

"I never heard of her," said Jeff. "Why?"

"It is the why-ness of things that brought this otiose *babu* through space like Arjuna's arrow—air sick—very. Why Cairo? Why should Jimgrim wish to see me? Why should a polylinguistic princess by the name of Chalawan de Sitlab, occupying semi-regal suite in this hotel, suborn its servants to inform her instantly when visitors approach your honor?"

"How the devil do you know that?" Jeff asked.

"Am blameless. Devil that resides in Jimgrim urging, this *babu* was victim of obedience to impulse. Never yet has Jimgrim sent for me to kiss me. Inference is obvious that Jimgrim is again on warpath, meaning that this *babu* will work and not get paid for it—except, of course, as stipulated—stipulation not yet argued. Have wife who thinks money is only proof of masculine fidelity. Am sole support of seven married sons, whose offspring suggest astronomical figures, and whose contempt for this progenitor increases in proportion to his debts. Consequently, must please Jimgrim. So, when was approached in corridor by negroid lackey asking if I visit 118, lied instantly—quicker than trigger of automatic. Walked full length of corridor looking at numbers on doors, turned at end of corridor and saw said individual considering me from mat in front of door of Suite A, squatting on it. Naturally, went at once to Suite A, which is at opposite end of corridor. Screen in front of door. Door open to admit draught—maybe—possibly—perhaps; but it is easier to hear when door is not shut. Do I bore you, sahib?"

"Bore ahead. We're listening."

"Must please Jimgrim, same being easy if you give him all he wants; but that is less easy. Jimgrim asks three questions and expects to be told everything from A to Z and from Einstein to twice two, all in form of telegram of ten words. Demanded to be told, accordingly, who lives in Suite A. Sudanese outpost on mat, probably unable to pronounce suborner's name, instructed me to go to hell in Arabic. Stepped around screen, announcing self in tone sufficiently immodest to avoid arrest for burglary. Was confronted by Syrian maid, who told me name of her employer. Said employer, radiantly visible in mirror through crack of door of inner room, spoke rapidly to maid in Arabic, to this *babu* in Hindustanee, to some one else invisible in French. Unless mirror lied—as I did—she is lovelier to look at than a daffodil in lotus colored lingerie.

"She asked me was I from Jimgrim.

Naturally I answered no, since truth is deadly and a half truth even more so. So she asked me did I come from Dorje. To which I naturally answered yes, not knowing Dorje and being curious concerning everything of which I am ignorant. Then she summoned the maid and slammed the door. Plenty of time for observation. Noticed locked trunk. Name Baltis rather heavily obscured by red paint. Baltis—Sitlab? Syrian maid—message—mystery—her Highness will be pleased to speak with me—alone—this afternoon—at four-fifteen. Thus mystified, this *babu* departed thence and hied him hither. Rammy sahib, in the name of all the devils in the universe, is our Jimgrim after Dorje?"

Jeff nodded.

"Oh, my amiable aunt! Have you seen the papers? An explosion on a warship—a fire in Marseilles—a fire in Paris—a fire in Geneva—"

"Strange's records!" Jeff said grimly.

"An explosion of a magazine in Toulon—a fire in Lisle—a fire in Brest—a fire in Toulouse—and then silence!"

"Censorship," said Jeff.

"And Jimgrim leads us against Dorje? Oh, my infinite emotions! Yes, please. We shall not drink many before Dorje gets us."

"You said you don't know him."

"Rammy sahib, who does? More—twice that much—fill her up with soda—thank you. Who knows who or where he is? All Asia brags that he is just beyond the skyline—coming, always coming. The King of the World is coming—they have said that for a hundred years—for a thousand years. Dorje is the genius who saw his chance to capitalize on all that advertising! It is what I myself have often thought of doing—would have done same, only I lack romantic appearance. There is something about me that makes men doubt my heroism. Doubters are not good die-hards. Furthermore, I am afraid of consequences. Dorje is afraid of nothing."

"How do you know all this?" Jeff asked him.

"Oh, for God's sake! Have I not been wooed by a woman who said she was one of Dorje's thousand concubines? Did she not tempt me to be one of Dorje's million mouths? This *babu* has a mouth which eats, I told her. May I eat for Dorje? But she requested me to feed her, saying Dorje expects help from every man. She ate my dinner—and then told me that I may speak for Dorje or be silent; but that if I speak against him silence will descend upon me with a permanence suggested by a death certificate."

"Why should they pick on you?" Jeff asked him.

"Why not? Is this *babu* not notorious for helping every one except himself? Am form and substance of Gray's 'Elegy'—am mute inglorious Milton, personage called goat in U. S. A.—embodiment of hope eternal, which is but a pseudonymn for Sisyphus, or back seat on bicycle built for two. Such pitiable optimists as this *babu* build all the empires—and then die in agonies of unrewarded zeal. That is why Dorje picked on me."

"Do you mean that Dorje personally picked you?"

"Why not? Winning consists in being won for. Verb sap. So if Dorje can not pick winners, kites and crows will presently be picking Dorje. Self am best bet in the universe, provided *quid pro quo* is adequate. But there were two few quids and too much *quo*."

"Have you a room?" I asked him.

"Not yet, sahib."

SO I WENT down to the desk and had a chat with Dougherty, who used to run a Raines Law joint in New York and is familiar with several angles of the hotel business. He made no bones at all about letting Chullunder Ghose have a room that has been used scores of times for some of the more refined and guileless diplomatic interludes. It is the end room on that corridor, and seems utterly above suspicion. On the one hand is a public lavatory, and on the other a sort of butler's pantry and some linen closets. Any

one might talk in there until doomsday without being overheard, if it were not for a narrow passageway between the closets and the outside wall that was once used to connect that room with the next one along the corridor. The passage has been boarded up at one end. The holes in the boards are usually plugged up, but not always. I myself had used those rooms in 1916 to discover a medical secret that was thought important to the Allies.

"I suppose you were seen to enter this room?" I suggested, when I had told Chullunder Ghose of the arrangement.

"Yes, sahib, not improbably—although I told that Sudanese that he was wanted inside, and I locked him in, not wishing him to mind my business. I was in here before they could summon any one by bell to let him out. But he who brought drinks—"

"Suliman," said Jeff, "has worked for me at intervals for fifteen years. I don't think he would talk about what goes on in here—not unless some one bribed extremely high and scared him at the same time."

Babu Chullunder Ghose began to grow excited. Again he pulled out his handkerchief and caught it between his toes repeatedly.

"Tell me about this princess, sahibs! Tell me all you know about her. Then find some one who will summon her to visit me in that room."

So we told him all we knew, and that took less time than one might suppose. His vivid imagination leaped from one fact to another with such rapidity that we could hardly keep up with him. He cracked his toes; he cracked his big, fat fingers. He blew his nose, and wiped his face, and threw his handkerchief and caught it with his foot—then suddenly resumed his Buddha-like composure along with his normal air of what he calls Uriah-Heepishness.

"Am failed B.A, Calcutta, lynx eyed examiners having prevented this *babu* from using most ingeniously folded notes. Am failed promoter of so many enterprises that I suspect the akasic record has forgotten half of them. Am so well used to failure in all personal affairs that I could write a book about it. But its publisher also would fail. Am a merciful man; why bankrupt publishers? Paradoxically flat broke, am physically fat, not flat. Nobody loves fat men. Nevertheless, what woman but confides in them? They love but never trust the lucky lean ones. They trust but never love us solidly emboweled drums of wisdom. Failure, am I? Sahibs, set me in a room with all the lovely women in the world—and I will tell you all their secrets quicker than a bird can pick the teeth of a crocodile!"

The problem was to get him into that room unseen by the princess or her servants. The more we could tell Grim about her, the better for Grim and the worse for her, if she was contemplating treachery. But she was no fool, and she undoubtedly knew which rooms we occupied. If she should learn that Chullunder Ghose had visited Jeff's room, it would be all up with any hope of getting her to confide in him. We solved it by going ourselves to call on her. We told the servant on the mat—humiliated and suspicious from having been locked in—that there was a box of flowers for her Highness in the lobby. He made the mistake of being insolent, which gave us an excuse to kick him downstairs; and that gave Chullunder Ghose any amount of time to get into the end room unseen. Then we knocked and the Syrian maid took our cards, but said her mistress could see nobody that afternoon. After that I went down to the desk and arranged with Dougherty to send word to the princess that the gentleman from India would receive her at four-fifteen in room 195. Then we hid in the passage between the linen closets and the wall; it was tight quarters and abominably hot, but there was just room for the two of us to peer through the holes in the wooden partition.

As a matter of fact, my prejudices at the moment were in favor of the princess. I could not help remembering her remarks about my being a keyhole peeper, and al-

though Jeff's bulk made the discomfort in that narrow passage almost unendurable, the fact that he seemed to have no compunctions about what we were doing was the only relief to the strain on my self-respect. Knowledge that she was a crook of unimpeachable impudence did not compensate for the distasteful nature of the job.

However, almost from the moment she entered the room that aspect of the situation vanished. I was glad I was listening. So was Jeff. We ceased even to be conscious of the stifling heat, although sweat streamed into our eyes and our joints ached with the strain of keeping still in awkward attitudes. We could see fairly well, and hear almost perfectly because Chullunder Ghose had thoughtfully set two chairs between us and the window.

"Why should I come to see you?" she demanded. "Why did you not come to my apartment?"

I could not have answered her as Chullunder Ghose did. She was too beautiful and too regally dressed to be treated with anything less than politeness, by any one not incorrigibly hard boiled. But the *babu* was boiled in India, where insults are the salt of diplomatic conversation.

"Fortunately you obeyed me," he answered. "What have you to say for yourself?"

She retorted:

"I don't know you. Give the pass word."

"It has been changed," he answered, "since you failed—and deserted your post—and brought this situation on us. If there is any reason why you should not die before you do us any further injury, I am commissioned to hear it."

"But who are you?" she demanded.

"Your judge. Others will execute my orders. They will execute you, unless you can show an excellent reason why not."

"Death never frightened me yet," she retorted.

"I am not concerned with your fears, and I have other business to attend to. Sit down and say what you have to say; I will listen unless you take too long about it."

SHE SAT down facing him. Chullunder Ghose, as much as ever like a great, fat god, assumed an expression of placid indifference. If she looked beautiful in his eyes, he contrived perfectly not to suggest it.

"Give me proof," she demanded. She seemed a totally different woman to the one I had seen in Marseilles. Then she had been, if anything, over-confident; she had let events unfold themselves and play into her hands, as if sure of her luck if of nothing else. She relied on skill now. "How did you find me here? How did you know I was coming?"

"I am not here to answer your questions," said Chullunder Ghose, "but to receive your answer to my question. Have you anything to say?"

She made up her mind. She sat back, relaxed, in the chair.

"If you are who you pretend to be, you may tell Dorje I have changed sides. As for you, if you think you can kill me, try it. I have met a man who is greater than Dorje." Then, lazily, as if she no longer cared for anything, she let her eyes wander around the room; they dwelt on the papered wooden partition, behind which Jeff and I lurked, for perhaps a fraction of a second longer than on any other object. "Dorje," she said, "has elements of greatness, but he won't last. He never did finish anything. When he was Solomon, the wealthiest king in the world, he went to pieces. As Karl Marx he could only sow seeds. He has sown them again—and another will reap. Tell Dorje that."

"May I tell him who is this paragon?"

She appeared to weigh that carefully, as if she felt tempted to name the individual before whose rising splendor Dorje's destiny had waned. However, she smiled at last, as if enjoying what she foresaw.

"Dorje will know soon enough. As for you, let me out of this room before I lose patience with you."

She had the gift of absolutely regal

insolence, but Chullunder Ghose had the equally great one of sublime cheek. Smiling as if fifty murderers were at his beck and call, he got up, bowed to her and started toward the door; but before he opened it he could not resist one "fat boy" shot to make her flesh creep.

"Sad, that one so beautiful and talented must die so horribly, and so soon. How pleased I would have been to modify at least the method, even though your life is forfeit."

She sneered as he opened the door for her.

"You *sound*," she said, "like one of Dorje's agents! He invariably uses sentimental fools who forget the countersign!"

We gave her time to reach her own apartment and then joined Chullunder Ghose. He was wiping his face with a towel, comically forlorn, but as shrewd as ever.

"Sahibs, if I were Dorje I would drown her, because if Dorje were King of the World she would look for some one to defeat him. If I were God she would never have been invented, so the world would be less interesting. If I were you, I would go now back to Rammy sahib's room and wait for what she does next, because she will do it swiftly. And if I were Jimgrim, I would not believe her when she says she is now against Dorje, any more than she believed me when I told her I am Dorje's agent. Furthermore, she knew there was some one behind that panel. Oh, I like her! This *babu* is once again a slave of Hanuman, who is a god of fortunately futile love affairs. I hope she dies in torments before she disillusions me. Am sadist. Masochism to the devil! But make haste, sahibs, because she is not lethargic like a cobra or a mongoose or electricity. The speed of light lags like a hearse when she thinks. And take my word for it, if she were off with the old love Dorje, she would not have hinted at the new love Jimgrim; she would be too anxious to guard Jimgrim from Dorje's anger. Did I not say I would pick her secret like a pop out of a weasel? Jimgrim put one over on her. She is out for vengeance! And the whole world for a battle ground—oh, why was I not born into Jimgrim's shoes!"

CHAPTER IX

"Emperor Jimgrim—how does that sound?"

WHEN we returned to Jeff's room there were two Arabs seated on the mat outside the door. They were dressed for the desert and looked as hard bitten as two dry bones. Their faces, framed in the flowing headgear that would make a Sphynx out of a tailor's dummy, were further obscured by the gloom; but Jeff seemed to recognize one of them. I supposed it was one of his multitude of ragtag and bobtail acquaintances, so I went on in and left him standing there. Chullunder Ghose came in presently and asked me who the men were.

"You don't know? See how accurately I can guess. It would be just like Rammy sahib to invent excuses for a trip on camelback from here to Baluchistan. It stands to reason that if Dorje is in Cairo we should go to Tashkent, and by the most uncomfortable means."

"Why do you think Dorje is in Cairo?" I demanded.

"Because Jimgrim ordered us to Cairo. That is why I don't think at all about it. I know Dorje is not here. If he were here, Jimgrim would be here too. I am afraid we leave from here by camel, for parts unknown. I am afraid we are *tertium quids*, like husbands in Reno, U.S.A. I think our Jimgrim uses us as generals use heroes; he sends us off in one direction to deceive the enemy by getting blown to smithereens, while he performs strategic retreat. I think he wants Dorje to believe he is in Cairo. And at the same time, I am damned if I know what I do think, except that camels are an anachronism."

Jeff came in and the Arabs followed. He unstrapped his traveling rug and spread that in a corner for them. They sat down like two road weary veterans who dourly mistrust civilization; and

when they had studied the furniture frankly, and us secretively, they relapsed into meditation. Jeff did not go to the trouble of introducing them, so I supposed they were old acquaintances who had come to ask a favor, although it was a mystery how they should have known he was in Cairo. Chullunder Ghose whispered to me:

"Those two are from the princess. Watch them. Very likely they have weapons underneath those long robes."

He had hardly finished making that remark when the princess herself entered. She had sent her servant in advance to knock on the door, but the man made no attempt to come in with her. As soon as she was inside and the door closed, Chullunder Ghose went to the keyhole and tried to see through it; failing, he opened the door and satisfied himself that the servant was not lurking outside. Jeff, of course, did the honors—dragged a chair up and asked her to be seated. However, she remained standing.

"It is about that man." She nodded toward the *babu*, who *salaamed* without betraying any too much reverence. He seemed intent on irritating her. "He is a dangerous fool, who just now boasted to me that he comes direct from Dorje."

Chullunder Ghose suddenly strode toward her, scowling straight into her eyes.

"If I am not Dorje himself, who am I?" he demanded.

"Is he a madman?" she asked.

"Very well then, never mind who I am. Dorje is in this room. Which is he?"

She glanced at the Arabs, and then again at them. She seemed entirely sure Chullunder Ghose was mad. She shrugged her shoulders.

"Did you see that, sahibs? She knows Dorje by sight, but she has not seen him often. She looked twice at the Arabs before she was sure. Did you see her?"

"Did you send this man to spy on me just now?" she asked Jeff. "Let me tell you, I won't endure such treatment. I came here because Jeemgreem invited me, but I shall go at once if I am to expect this kind of thing. Where is Jeemgreem? Here in this boring place I have waited patiently, stagnating, doing nothing—"

She paused, and Chullunder Ghose nudged me. His mild brown eyes were masking, I thought, hurricanes of inward laughter.

"Jeemgreem!" she whispered. "Jeemgreem! Wait and see!"

The princess stared at each of us in turn, and then continued—

"I have done nothing—nothing, while I might have helped you against Dorje, as I promised Jeemgreem I would."

"*Na'am*," remarked one of the Arabs.

"Who are they?" she demanded.

"No one in particular," said Jeff. "Just friends of mine."

She looked at them suspiciously, then curled that scar marked upper lip at Jeff and me.

"You are incompetents. It is useless to hope to work with you. Dorje is making his moves to be King of the World, while all you do is loaf in bedrooms and submit me to humiliating espionage."

"*Na'am*," said the Arab again.

"Does he understand English?"

She turned on the Arab and tongue lashed him in fluent Arabic, but he took no notice of her.

"Wrong dialect," said Jeff. "He isn't from the Fayoum."

"No matter."

She shrugged her shoulders again. She seemed exasperated almost to hysteria.

"You see," said Jeff, as gently as he could with that great growling voice of his, "you don't know Grim yet. When—"

"Know him?" she retorted. "I am weary of him! When I make promises I keep them. I promised help against Dorje—"

"*Na'am*," said the Arab, and I thought Chullunder Ghose would burst. He was sweating with excitement about something.

"Yet what can I do?"

"You have done all you could," said the Arab. "I have never had more help from any one."

SHE BEHAVED perfectly, not pretending *not* to be astonished, but controlling herself. She was at her best when suddenly alarmed, or in sudden emergency. It was Chullunder Ghose who threw all restraint to the winds, let go a roar of delight and actually danced, like a big, fat devotee of Siva, among the chairs and suitcases.

"Jimmy sahib! Jimgrim!" he shouted. And there were tears in his eyes. "This *babu* knew you! Dammit—did I sit still? Dammit—did I talk like son of sucking pig from Sodom and Gomorrah just to keep myself from giving college yell of University of Hook-or-crook? Oh, Jimmy—Jimmy—Jimmy sahib! Jimgrim! This *babu* says *salaam* up from cockles of his being!"

"Cheerio, Chullunder Ghose," Grim answered. "Come and shake hands."

"Sahib, this is Fountain of Youth! This old *babu* is young again!"

Grim smiled, and any one could have picked him out then from a thousand men. Without ceasing to smile, and with the *babu's* hand still working his up and down like a pump handle, he said suddenly—

"Lock that door, some one, and give me the key."

I was just in time to prevent the princess from escaping, although escape is hardly the proper word. She had moved toward the door as those rarely great actresses can, who are on or off stage before any one knows it. There was so little suggestion of flight that I felt like a clumsy hoodlum when I intercepted her and turned the key.

"You remind me," she said, "of a pig on its way to the trough at feeding time."

I tossed the key into Grim's lap and offered her a chair, but she took another one. Chullunder Ghose hove himself up on to Jeff's writing table and squatted there, still chuckling at Grim, who was talking now in undertones to the man on the mat beside him.

"Oh, beg pardon," he said suddenly. "I haven't introduced you, have I. This is Colonel Howard McGowan, Madame la Princesse Chalawan de Sitlab en Siam—Jeff Ramsden—Bob Crosby—and Chullunder Ghose. Colonel McGowan is of the British army—special service."

"I vote we drink. Will the princess join us?" said McGowan.

He was a man of Grim's height—taller, that is, than the ordinary, but not so tall as to attract attention. His face looked almost exactly like an Arab's, hooked nose and all; but for his Scots name I would have guessed him as being of Hebrew ancestry; his eyes, too, had the liquid Hebrew intelligence that seems to make so many of them linguists and jacks of any trade. He was a man whom you could no more help liking when he looked directly at you than you could have helped wondering at the way he and Grim dissolved themselves, apparently at will, into men of the wind seared desert—and then reasserted Western breeding at a moment's notice.

By the time the drinks came—champagne, at McGowan's suggestion—we were all feeling pretty keyed-up and expectant, but the sense of strain had vanished and even the princess had entirely recovered her poise, which was what I think Grim wanted her to do, it being one of his extraordinary maxims than even an enemy, at his best, can be depended on, whereas an enemy in dire straits is likely to do something unexpected. He claims, for instance, that when Saladin sent a horse to Richard Cœur de Lion, so that Richard might fight on equal terms, Saladin was merely wise, not chivalrous. He touched glasses with the princess.

"I depended on you to get in touch with Dorje's agents here," he assured her, smiling. "Thanks to you, we have caught Tassim Bey, among others. Among others—" he repeated. "I was in Cairo before you were. Fooled you by that cablegram that made you think I was still in London. What makes you think Tassim is so important?"

His disarming manner of having just laid down a bridge hand and discussing it unnerved the princess far more than, I think, arrest or terroristic tactics would have done. No spy of the genuine cosmo-

politan variety has any sense of loyalty whatever, but they all have gamblers' instincts and a sense of sportsmanship that far transcends mere bravery. Their strength is delight in danger. Their weakness is vanity. Their genius consists in almost superhumanly skilful opportunism.

"Tassim is a weakling," she answered. "Dorje will kill him, if you don't. I suppose that person—" scornfully she turned her eyes toward Chullunder Ghose—"saw Tassim in my room. Perhaps he heard Tassim talking; and I know he saw me in the mirror. What of it? Did I not say I would help you? And how could I have helped you without intriguing with Dorje's people?"

"True," said Grim, "you couldn't have. I acknowledge your help. We could hardly have managed without you. But wasn't it a trifle drastic to propose to burn this hotel? True, that would have deprived Dorje of the services of Jeff Ramsden and Bob Crosby, if they had happened to get caught in it, but—"

"You accuse me of that?" she demanded.

"I don't need to. Your Syrian maid is the source of the—shall I say rumor?"

"And you, with your experience of Syrians, believe her?"

"Why not? She was chosen by Colonel McGowan for the same reason that you engaged her—because she had served you so well once before. That time you were working for the French and she was set by the British to watch you. This time, of course, you were working for me and she was acting merely as liaison unit. It seems strange you didn't understand that."

"Tassim talked of firing the hotel," she answered. "I advised against it."

"Is that why your locked trunk had this in it?" Colonel McGowan asked her.

FROM under his voluminous robe he produced a piece of brass tube that had plugs screwed into both ends. One of the plugs was not screwed home; he took hold of it as if about to give it a turn or two. I saw her wince, but she controlled herself. I think she felt less scared than I did; I know my blood ran cold and I wished the door was not locked and the key in Grim's lap.

"How many turns does it need," McGowan asked, "to make it dangerous?"

"Just one," Grim answered, "but it's all right; go on, turn it if you want to. Even the elevator isn't running. The hotel folk have turned off the juice at the main switch."

McGowan held it toward the princess.

"Turn it for us," he suggested naively. "You know how."

She refused.

"I have nothing to do with it—nothing."

Jeff Ramsden stepped into that breach.

"May I see it? I was always interested in mechanics." He took it and held it close to the princess, taking one end between thumb and finger as if about apply force. "Which end do you turn—this one?"

Then she yielded, but even so, without panic. She spoke quietly.

"That end. But if you turn it, and if there is current turned on in the next building, or in the next but one, and if there is anything explosive within quite a wide radius, you will be sorry you turned it, that's all."

"Thank you," said McGowan. "That is just what I wanted to know. Who hid the dynamite in this hotel?"

"Tassim Bey," she answered, "said he thought of doing it."

McGowan studied me a moment.

"Just my size. I wonder if you'd lend me a suit of your clothes. I'll have to borrow shoes, too. Think you can fit me?"

He gave the brass affair to Grim and I gave him the key of my room, telling him to help himself.

"If there *is* dynamite," he said. "I'll find it. But I want to search without starting talk. The likeliest place is the storeroom. I'll give my right name and say I think a package belonging to me got in there by mistake."

I locked the door behind him and returned the key to Grim, who was examining the brass tube. Suddenly he looked up at the princess.

"You'll find it hard to believe," he said, "but I actually didn't know you had any of these in that trunk. You were watched so carefully in France after the Marseilles incident that, clever though you are, it seemed impossible for you to hide anything from us. But I know now how you did it. Changed trunks, of course. Swapped them in transit. Was there anything in this one that you personally need?"

She nodded, too alert to trust herself to speak.

"It is being gone through by McGowan's men," Grim went on, as if he were merely making conversation. "You may have back anything that doesn't interest us. This—" he tapped the brass tube with the door key— "happens to be a fake one. It was made in the railway workshops—from memory; I'm really flattered that it fooled you. We found several real ones; but as you know, turn this screw and the first contact with electricity destroys them, and they were all destroyed in making tests.

"There was one bad accident; the first one tested blew up an ammunition depot. After that, the censorship was clapped on. Things were getting much too serious. Some of them appear to have reached the United States; there was an unexplained explosion in New Jersey that killed more than a hundred people. No one ever will know, probably, what sunk the new motor ship *Dido* in mid-Atlantic. Maiden voyage. She was seen to blow up suddenly. No survivors. Nearly three thousand people missing. We've a theory that one or two of these things were on board the *Dido;* and another theory that Dorje has been rather badly rattled by the premature disaster in Marseilles. Perhaps his agents got nervous and are acting on their own initiative. What we don't pretend to understand is, why his agents should be willing to destroy themselves on a ship at sea. But of course, it's more than possible that many of these things are faulty and go off without turning the screw. The important point is, that almost any one could hide one in his luggage, and not a ship on the sea is safe from them until we find the source of the supply."

Jeff made a gruesome suggestion.

"Any good mechanic could fix up clockwork mechanism that would turn that screw at the end of any given number of hours, or even days. Ship a trunk in the hold of a liner—no need for Dorje's man to be on board."

Grim stood at last. He stood and looked at the princess, liking her, I don't doubt, as he likes all interesting people. When he spoke, there was not a trace in his voice of condemnation—even of criticism.

"So you see, we simply must catch Dorje. And I need your help again."

"You—you need no help from any one," she answered. "You are the devil."

But Grim did not look like the devil, then or ever; and, watching her in ways that a medical practise teaches some of us, I drew the conclusion that either she loved devils or else that she did not think Grim was one.

"What will you do if you catch him?" she asked.

Grim took thought before he answered—

"I will know that then."

IT WAS an example of how swift thought can be. During that second or two while Grim was searching for exactly the right words with which to tell her nothing, but to increase her curiosity, a whole chain of notions flashed through my mind, of which the gist was this: What use were Jeff and myself and the *babu?* True, I knew Grim has a reputation for surrounding himself with friends who, subtly perhaps, but suitably, contribute to his intellectual processes without having to be argued with or told what not to do. And doctors like to think themselves indispensable to any expedition. But it

seemed to me, during those moments, that we three were about as useless to him as so much dunnage. We had sat around, talked, spied a little, to no purpose, and done nothing constructive. I did not know what to do now, although I half sensed that Grim expected something from one or other of us.

And while I wondered what to say or to do, Chullunder Ghose slapped his fat thigh a resounding thwack that startled all of us and voiced stark naked nonsense:

"Am immoralist. Am weaned on theory that right and wrong are two sides of self-same silly nonsense. Can do—that is sole test of what any one should do. Can get through to Tibet? Do it. Can take your goods? Do it. Can be Caesar and Napoleon plus Alexander? Do same. Why not? Why did God make little apples? Nobody knows, but wise men eat same, not asking questions.

"Were I Jimmy sahib—beg his pardon; were I honorable Jimgrim—having at my mercy most astonishing princess who wears orchid lingerie and whose infinite variety is soul of wit *et cetera*, would take same—stay not on the order of my taking, either! Exquisite emotions notwithstanding, then would positively outdo Dorje. Slam-bang—go right to it! Dorje's game is obvious—down with everything and up with Dorje! Dorje is doing it. Opportunist policy is obviously do in Dorje and seize reins of Dorje's power! Emperor Jimgrim—how does that sound? And such a woman to share one's throne—oh, is the champagne finished? I would like to drink to that thought: Emperor Jimmy Jimgrim—Empress Baltis . . . *Banzai*, as the Japanese say!"

The princess stared at him, then said in in a rather strained voice—

"Did I call you a fool just now?"

"Your mistake," he answered.

Grim astonished me. Unsmiling, serious, he turned to Jeff and asked him:

"How about that? What do you say? I could call on Meldrum's money."

Jeff astonished me almost more than Grim did.

"You'd be a fool for your trouble. Who wants an emperor's job? Chullunder Ghose is right, of course—a man should do what he can. But can you?"

"Some one must," Grim answered. "Dorje has laid his plans too well; he has got these brass things much too well distributed. One after another he intends to blow up every arsenal and warship in the world, and who can stop him? The damned things seem to suck up electricity and turn it into a vibration that sets off all explosives within a radius that depends on nothing but the strength of the current. Destroy all warships and ammunition—then what? The man with a sword is master, isn't he?"

"And I can love you, Jeemgreem," said the princess. "Dorje I do not love. Few do."

Grim caught my eye.

"What do you think?"

"I'm against it," I answered. "I wouldn't have believed you would consider it for half a second. I suppose your wanderings in Tibet have converted you to some occult theory that seems to justify treason—"

The *babu* interrupted:

"Treason against gunpowder! Treason against governments that plot against each other! Treason against kings and dictators and parliaments and congresses that never yet have thought of anything except how to exploit the unorganized! Dorje is right! Do away with such devilish treason against humanity—blow it all up! The only thing wrong with Dorje is that Jimgrim is better. It is treasonable not to vote for Jimgrim. Am not treasonable person."

"Dammit, Jim, go steady," Jeff urged.

"Jeemgreem—" said the princess, and I liked her less that minute than at any time, before or since, although her own excitement and the breathlessness of her concentration seemed to intensify her beauty and make her as desirable, in one sense, as Salome must have been—"Jeemgreem, I will show you Dorje if you do that. I will lead you to him. You, not Dorje, should be King of the World.

Do you not remember, Jeemgreem, how you and I, in past lives, always have helped each other? Forgive me, Jeemgreem, that I worked against you. It was a very bad mistake. From now on I am for you, heart and soul."

Grim smiled at her.

"Why should I trust you?"

"Smile at me! Smile like that at me! Look into my eyes, Jeemgreem—read there what is in them!"

There came a knock at the door, and as I turned to open it I saw Jeff Ramsden looking as miserable as only a big man can, and I took some comfort from it, because Jeff has more influence with Grim than any other living man. The *babu*, on the other hand, was purple in the face with gloating excitement, and I felt like crossing the room to kick him.

When I turned the key McGowan walked in, in a suit of my clothes. The princess' hands were on Grim's shoulders and she was talking to him in undertones; Chullunder Ghose and Jeff, in equally low tones, were arguing over by the writing table.

"What's going on?" McGowan asked. "Yes, found the dynamite in tin cans, in a case marked chicken soup. But what's up?"

I suppose there was actually no excuse for what I said then. But Grim and McGowan were so obviously in each other's confidence that at the moment it seemed no breach of confidence to come straight out with the facts.

"Grim is considering taking Dorje's place," I told him.

"High time, too," he answered. "Someone must. Reuter have just announced that three of our cruisers blew up in Portsmouth harbor. We're afraid that Woolwich Arsenal may go next. Can't turn off a whole world's electricity. We know there's a plot here in Cairo to blow up the Citadel. Armstrongs—Vickers—Maxim—Nobels—Dupont—all the makers of explosive in the world are at their wits' end what to do. It's a sure thing that Dorje will put all our armies and navies out of existence in less than a week. Then what price India? What price China? What price Egypt, the Sudan, Arabia? What price you and me if some one doesn't do in Dorje and try to control things? Grim's the best man—good dark horse; can't beat him!"

I locked the door and turned my back, not knowing what to answer. The whole business seemed too incredible.

"Jeemgreem," I heard the princess say, "you and I died because we loved each other, when you were Sir Francis Weston and I was—"

But I had heard enough of that stuff. I approached Jeff Ramsden, but as I did so he looked past me and almost growled at Grim:

"If you and Chullunder Ghose are right I'll eat my hat. But damn you, I won't desert you, although I advise against it. Do as you like, Jim. I'll stick."

What could I do? A man can't higgle at the minor morals when the whole world seems at a madman's mercy and there is nothing except friendship left. I said:

"All right, then I suppose I'll stick too. But I think Grim's crazy."

CHAPTER X

"Dorje! Dorje!"

AS A MATTER OF FACT, it was I who was crazy. Any one who knew Grim might have known that no consideration could induce him to fall for any such proposition. But if there is one thing more astonishing than Grim's subtlety it is the daring with which he allows such an irresponsible genius as Chullunder Ghose to suggest a line of strategy, and the confidence with which he counts on Jeff to follow along, like a tank or a howitzer, and lend substance to what might otherwise turn into an airy fiasco. Jeff's reluctance justified the princess in believing Grim was serious. Mine confirmed her opinion. Jeff was acting a part. I was not; but nobody except the princess, and perhaps Grim,

believed I was not, and my genuine friendship with Chullunder Ghose dates from that moment when he leaped to the entirely false conclusion that I had acted the part of conscientious objector simply to convince the princess that I knew Grim was in earnest.

"Sahib," he said to me afterward, "this world is full of wise men who are big fools. It takes a fool like me to be wise on the spur of a moment. But even when said spur pricks this *babu* to hilarious hocus-pocus, what use would cosmic wisdom be without such genius as yours, that acts like prohibitionist asserting booze is banished from the U. S. A. and looks as if he means it! Spur of moment is supreme test. But for you, that woman would have doubted Jimgrim. Now, however, she doubts nothing except whether ex-Queen of Sheba is suitable person to overthrow Solomon-Dorje."

"Does she believe all that junk about her previous incarnations?" I asked him.

"Certainly she does. That is why she is also able to believe that Jimgrim would like to be King of the World. Sahib, all of us have heel-of-Achilles hidden somewhere in our anatomy. Meldrum Strange believes he can buy paradise with money. Rammy sahib thinks that difficulties were made by God for us to smash, and that only infidels avoid them. This *babu* is satisfied of ultimate futility of all things; nevertheless, am chaste voluptuary, fearful of extremes and yet pursuing them because there seems no end to anything and why grow weary of the middle? That woman, otherwise sane as an icicle, thinks she was Baltis, Queen of Sheba, and Anne Boleyn and God knows who else; so she can be caught in snares that would not fool even a politician. And I know Jimgrim's weakness, but I will not tell that. Yours is lack of imagination, but I will not tell that also—will merely make note of same for future purposes."

I suppose he was right. I could not imagine, for instance, why Colonel McGowan had shown no trace of hesitation in accepting the idea that Grim should dethrone Dorje and seize world dominion. It had shocked me. Why should it not shock him, a British officer on British territory? Surely the first impact of the idea should have made him hesitate? And why should he trust me, a stranger, so unreservedly? He invited me to go with him around Cairo, to look the situation over, as he expressed it, and we went together to his quarters where he changed into his own civilian clothes. There, something of the doubt in my mind probably escaped into the conversation. At any rate, he enlightened me.

"Grim is a wizard at picking the right line and the right man. It's a working rule with those of us who know him to accept the men he O.K's and to act like lightning on his ideas, no matter how mad they may seem at the moment. He never takes advantage of us. He has taught me more in one week than I had learned in twenty-five years about letting one clue open up another."

He said nothing of his intention to experiment with me. He went on talking, perhaps "doping me out"; I don't know; I do know I was careful not to let him overestimate my intelligence, as I know of no more ghastly experience than to be depended on and then fall short of expectations.

"This game," he remarked, "is like polo with the rules off. All speed, hard hitting and team play. As a matter of raw truth, we are absolutely up against it this time, and it's much worse than is generally known. It's more sudden than the World War, and we are less prepared for it. In fact, we don't know what the deuce to do. The troops are almost out of hand; you see, we hardly dare to let them have a round of ammunition; one—just one of those damned brass gadgets is enough to blow 'em all to Kingdom Come if there's an electric current within a mile of 'em. We're taking no chances of that, let me tell you. We're evacuating the Citadel, reserve ammunition and all. No electricity out in the desert. Then if Dorje's men fire the city, we can march back *with* our ammunition, instead of

being caught like rats in a hot trap. But come on, let's get busy."

CAIRO was already in ferment. Reuter's cablegrams announcing the sinking of British cruisers, following on a series of similar disasters in France and explosions all over the world, had set all Europeans and all the educated Egyptians by the ears. The London Stock Exchange had suspended business; almost every other bourse, including the cotton exchange in Alexandria, had followed suit. There was a rumor, backed by enormous clouds of yellow smoke in several directions, that the warehoused cotton crop was burning; and now, on top of all that, the most alarming certainty of all, that the troops —the hated, irritating guardians of British overlordship—were on the march, evacuating Cairo, with their ammunition wagons hurrying southward ahead of them.

Rumors—rumors—rumors—of a war in the Sudan, of an invasion by mutinous Sudanese, of a sudden invasion by Italy at war with France and England; a proclamation posted in the streets forbidding the use of all private electric installations until further notice; motorcycles roaring through the streets because the telephone was discontinued; another proclamation, misspelled and with the ink still wet, giving warning that as an emergency measure Cairo would have no electricity until further notice, but that kerosene had been commandeered by the government and would be rationed for use in oil lamps . . .

Crowds, volatile, inflammable, afraid, so swarming in the streets and around the mosques that it was almost impossible for an automobile to get through. Then an idiotic story, put in the form of a question by a frenzied storekeeper who jumped on the runningboard and yelled in McGowan's face that the Abyssinians were marching down the Nile a million strong.

"And what the hell can anybody tell 'em?" asked McGowan, when we had got rid of that man.

Some one else was telling plenty. Some one was making rumors by the hatful and spreading them through the bazaars and back streets. There was a story of an air raid on the way, made plausible by the roar of the planes of the Royal Air Force circling over the city in groups of three, with the laudable object of restoring confidence. But worst of all, there was a tumult gathering in the throats of narrow lanes and an increasing growl of "Dorje!" that occasionally swelled into a mob roar, "Dorje! Dorje!" and grew low again. It appeared to be checked by the sight of bayonets, and armored cars, and two tanks; but whether or not those street patrols had ammunition or were merely bluffing nobody could guess.

"We know," McGowan told me, "that about a hundred of those Dorje-dingbats are in Cairo. And it's probable that they've an electric plant hidden somewhere. Start that up, and turn the plugs on a few of those things—might as well shoot the men beforehand as let 'em get caught with ammunition in their belts. Dorje has won Cairo. Can he hold it, that's the question."

I asked McGowan about his own automatic; I had seen him put one in his pocket.

"Oh, we take chances at our trade," he answered. "That's different. The troops, of course, are mad-angry. They think they are not being trusted. But believe me, they're too valuable just now to be risked against a mechanical enemy that can kill 'em all at one turn of a switch. No, Dorje has won Cairo—for the moment. And the devil of it is, we don't know Dorje from a hole in the wall. We don't know where he is, nor who he is, nor how many other cities he is attacking at this moment."

"Do his gadgets blow up gasoline?" I asked.

"In certain circumstances, yes, apparently. The air force reserve supply tank burst into flames at half-past nine this morning. They say the petroleum wells are all on fire at Baku."

"For once then the Soviet government isn't under suspicion?"

"Hell's bells, no! They would hardly burn their own wells to annoy the universe. As a matter of fact, they're as rattled as we are. They're suffering worse. There's an unconfirmed message in code to the effect that the Mujiks have all gone Dorje and are proclaiming a new dispensation, with Dorje as King of the World. And India—Jee-rusalem! The cable is silent. Figure for yourself what that means."

I would not have believed that a city could change its hue, and almost its identity, so suddenly as Cairo did that day. It was not only the smoke from the burning cotton sheds, or the din of the angering crowds in public squares and down the stenching side streets. Chaos struck the place, changing it under our eyes, as if it were a new Pompeii being blotted out by a new Vesuvius, only with this difference: that nobody knew where to run and the mob was possessed by a weird, unexplainable spirit of waiting for something to happen. The city was already at their mercy, and they waited—waited. Every plan, perhaps theirs also, if they had one, had been rendered useless by the fact that electricity and all explosives were out of commission. A man with a stick in his hand was as good as the next. But who knew whose stick was a hollow thing that held a brass tube? And who knew that the troops were without ammunition?

"Dorje!"

THE GROWL of the word kept gaining above the tumult, and the king of Egypt's mounted bodyguard, parading near the palace with a fine air of fearless discipline, retired in front of it sullenly, until the king and his *entourage* had time to crowd into about a dozen motorcars and stream away southward. Then the bodyguard fell back on the palace and sat their horses, looking sulkily ready for business—or, almost ready. They, too, seemed to me, if I can read men's faces, to be expecting something that had not yet appeared—possibly a leader?

"Dorje," I said to McGowan, as we began to drive at greater speed at last, through quieter streets toward the hospital, "must have been at this game quite a long time. This is a prepared situation. Seems funny to me that the secret services of six or seven powers couldn't run him down and stop this before it happened. How is it you didn't find him?"

"Give me your guess," he retorted.

I suggested, "there ain't no such person," and McGowan rather resented it, or seemed to.

"Too damned obvious," he answered. "Nearly everybody said that Ulianoff and Bronstein were nothing—not worth giving thought to—until they blossomed forth as Lenin and Trotsky. This bird has studied their game and has gone them one better, that's all. There isn't a major government that hasn't files and files about the Oriental rumor of a King of the World who is likely to come at any minute. It's a cult. It embraces all religions. We have all of us known for years that even the Mohammedans were listening to it. And we have all known there was something more than communism at the bottom of the unrest that has run like a riot through Asia. But lay our hands on Dorje? Fine tooth combs catch fleas, but Dorje—no, sir!"

"There's no such person," I repeated. "I will bet you all the dollars I own against the middle of a doughnut that Dorje is a myth invented by a committee."

Luckily for me he did not accept that bet. But it was good luck that I offered to make it, because it put a thought into my mind, and I have one of those minds in which thoughts stick like leeches until, as none too seldom happens, I am proven wrong. The momentary upshot was that McGowan began vaguely to dislike me and to distrust my intuition; uncomfortably aware of that, I lapsed into silence and not another word passed between us until we reached the new public

hospital and left the car in charge of McGowan's orderly.

I had no idea why he had brought me to the hospital. The European and Egyptian members of the staff were standing by in good shape, and there was no evident symptom of panic except for what one can only describe as atmosphere; that, for lack of a better comparison, suggested the incidence of a baffling epidemic. There was none of the orderly hurry of war time, when every one knows what to do and there are only too few individuals to do it. Here there were plenty of individuals, all resolute—but baffled, mystified.

We were informed, before we had asked a question, that the operating rooms were reserved for emergency cases only, owing to the lack of electric light. But that did not interest McGowan, who was abrupt and uncommunicative. He gave my name, not his, and led me as fast as I could follow him upstairs into a small room at the end of a corridor. The window shade was down; he jerked it up. A nurse was in the room; he ordered her out. A screen was around the bed; he removed it.

"See what you make of that," he said, and turned away, as if he had already seen more than enough.

I looked down at a woman swathed in bandages. She appeared to have been burned; the nature of the dressings suggested that. But her face was uninjured. And except that her face was white and tired by agony, it so resembled that of the Princess Baltis that I thought, for at least a minute, it was she herself lying there.

CHAPTER XI

"Stole my name. Says she is Queen of Sheba. I am."

THERE was even a scar on the upper lip. I looked at the scar closely and decided it was not a birthmark; it might even have been inflicted recently, and it seemed slightly larger as well as slightly higher up than that on the lip of the Princess Baltis.

"Name? Nationality?" I asked, and McGowan answered without turning his head. He was standing over by the door with his hand on the knob.

"Came from the Cape by way of Kenia, Nile steamer, and by train from Khartoum. British-Indian passport bearing evidence of having been forged in Warsaw, but *visas* for almost every country in the world apparently O.K. under the microscope. Name given as Baltis, Maharanee of Chota Korinpore, which is a small state in the northern part of the Central Provinces of India. Domicile given as Chandalia, which is the capital of that state. Cabled India, of course, at once; but no reply—yet."

"Haven't you other means of checking up?" I asked him.

"London—India office. No record there of a maharanee by that name. Reply, in code, asks whether we are not confusing her with Baltis understood to be French secret agent."

"Injuries caused—"

"One of those damned brass tubes. Suspected, without proof, of having brought in dozens of 'em in her luggage. Luggage, of course, searched thoroughly; nothing found of the slightest significance."

"Staying—"

"Mena House Hotel—out near the Pyramids."

"Where did it happen?"

"Nobody knows. She was found lying in the garden of an unoccupied villa belonging to Tassim Bey, who is under arrest. Swears he knows nothing about her."

"Why me?"

"Want your opinion."

"Has she said anything?"

"Not one word."

I decided the woman was listening. It was impossible to be quite sure of that, but I was almost sure that she was not unconscious.

"No use guessing," I said. "I shall

have to examine her injuries. Call in the nurse."

McGowan stepped outside and closed the door. He returned in a minute and said the nurse was busy at the moment but would come as soon as she had helped another nurse with bandages. He had obviously not spoken to the nurse, knowing I would not have dreamed of removing those excellently applied dressings without the permission of the doctor in charge of the case.

"An anæsthetic," I said, "is out of the question. And unfortunately in a case like this the agony is excruciating. But if I'm to help her there is nothing for it but immediate examination. Tell the nurse we shall need two or three others to hold her. Oh, hello."

She had opened her eyes. Her lips moved.

"Let me alone. Let me die."

She seemed unable to move her head, so I drew up a chair and sat where she could not see my face but where I could watch every trace of emotion in hers. Suddenly, outside, not far away, there was a thud like the shock of a howitzer going off; it shook the building; then came the shuddering blast of three explosions one close on another, followed by the high pitched uproar of a crowd in panic.

She smiled. I have seen many people smile like that on death beds, and especially criminals. Some drunkards do it, and some drug addicts. It suggests a peculiar vanity; and I have been told that when a clever cross-examiner detects that smile on the face of a witness he can usually extract the information that he wants by using artfully half hidden flattery. That thought I had had, about Dorje being not one man but a committee, suddenly reasserted itself, induced, I think, by a glimpse of McGowan's face; he was not full of praise of my method. The combination of the woman's smile and McGowan's effort to conceal the thought that he was wasting time produced an idea, and I remembered Grim's opinion in Marseilles that Dorje's plans had gone off half cocked.

"We have caught your twin sister," I said, "and she tells us that your Dorje is only one of a committee, but that her Dorje is the real one. Your Dorje, she says, is a traitor who has spoiled everything by being ambitious for himself."

"Am I dying?" she asked.

"Undoubtedly. You can't possibly live."

"Are we alone?"

"We shall be in a moment." I turned to McGowan. "Leave the room, please, and close the door after you. Then stand outside and see that no one interrupts us."

He opened the door, closed it again and drew near, making less noise than a cat. He placed a hand on my shoulder to steady himself and we both leaned as close as we dared, he listening from behind me; but it was difficult to hear what she said. She mumbled, with only occasional spurts of quite distinct speech; and even so, she said nothing at all until I jogged her memory.

"You can talk now. He has closed the door behind him. Your sister said—"

"Slut! Liar! Younger than me—I am one hour older; stole my name—says she is Queen of Sheba—I am."

McGowan nudged me. He was not interested in the Queen of Sheba at the moment, and he lacked my confidence that she would live long enough to tell what he did want to know. I jogged her memory again.

"Your sister says that you don't know the real Dorje."

"He will kill her. Dorje loves me. I will say to him, 'She says you are not real.' "

"How will Dorje get the message?"

Silence, in which I heard McGowan's wrist watch ticking out of step with mine. I was afraid I had asked the wrong question. McGowan nudged me again, but I waited, not daring to add to her reluctance to speak. At last her lips moved—

"Tassim."

I touched her hair.

"Where is Tassim?"

"I will find him."

"Who are you?"

I drew a long bow at a venture—

"Haroun ben Yahudi."

"Haroun?" Instantly she spoke in Arabic and I missed some of what she said, but McGowan got all of it. "What are you doing here? Find Tassim. Command Tassim to tell Dorje that woman lies about him. Dorje loves me. He never did love her. Say that to him, Haroun. Make him do it." Silence again. Then, suddenly, "Haroun, where is your ship? Can you put me in it? Take me to him, Haroun."

She was more than half delirious, now. The effort to speak was burning up the dregs of her vitality. She mumbled, and neither of us could distinguish a word of it. Then, suddenly, clearly again, in Arabic:

"Haroun, bury me at sea if I don't reach Dorje. But sail swiftly, Haroun. If you reach Karachi Dorje will come to me."

She tried to sit up then, but the words she would have uttered turned into an almost soundless scream as agonies of pain shot through her; and she died before McGowan could summon the nurse, who eyed us two as if she thought we had done murder. Possibly we had. I don't know. She might have lived another hour or two without our interference.

"Tassim next," said McGowan. "He is locked up and he hasn't said much yet. With this to go on—"

"No," I answered, "Grim next. Tell Grim and let Grim cross-question Tassim."

"Right you are. About all we've got is Tassim and Karachi, so far."

"Plus," said I, "the fact that you were right about Dorje being a man, not a committee."

"Think so?" he answered. "I doubt it, now. To me it begins to look almost probable that those two women have been dealing with different men—and neither knew it."

TO BE CONTINUED

The SHELL

By F. ST. MARS

IT WAS deadly silent down there in the underworld of the still, cold water. Not a sound pierced the green, semi-luminous haze. Not a movement came down from the ten-foot circle of white-gold light which marked where the surface lay sparkling in the sun. Everything was grimly cold and mysteriously sinister, but the silence was the most terrifying part of it.

If a man had been able to live down there that silence would have driven him mad. It was all so cold blooded and nerveless, and God knew what form of horrible death might come sliding, gliding out of the green fog that hung like a gauze curtain all around.

It was the floor of the sea.

Suddenly a ghostly form grew out of the haze, gliding wraith-like low over the seaweed. You could see its head swaying from side to side as it thrashed itself along by oaring its big, long tail, screw fashion; could see the staring, cruel, expressionless eyes, the pointed snout, and the white belly beneath the spotted sides. It was a dogfish following up the taint of some carrion on the tide.

It passed in awful silence, and presently a rather pretty spiral shell which had been lying on the sand motionless and apparently lifeless, all the time, began slowly to move. Its owner also had scented the smell of death carried on the water from afar, as smells are carried on the wind above in the open air, and it was moving up the line of scent. It was a whelk.

Very gradually, very slowly the whelk glided over the golden floor, feeling his way inch by careful inch, snail-like in appearance and clumsy, his shell rolling on his back as he moved. Very cumbersome looked that shell, not to say old fashioned. It was as though its owner belonged to a class of animals already out of date, but— Well, there was the gray mullet that came suddenly flashing as he turned, down out of the haze. The shell seemed to suck in the whelk as a man might draw in a quick breath; the fish nosed the hard surface of the uncompromising spiral and passed on.

Yes, a shell house has its uses to a soft bodied beastie who is good to eat; yet, lest apparently the whelk should become too cocky over the fact, nature has ordained that there shall be a fly even in the whelk's ointment.

Five minutes slid by during which the shell and the neighboring pebbles moved about as much as each other. Then, all at once, it became apparent that the creature was moving again. Goodness knows how long he had been doing so, for the movement was at first so stealthy, so craftily gradual, that none could say where it began or where it ended. Anyway, he was certainly not in the place that he had been five minutes back.

Another dogfish, following precisely on the trail of the first, passed with the slow waving gait of all the sharks when hunting. A third followed and yet another—jackals of the sea trailing the carrion taint.

The whelk only stopped long enough to let their shadows by, and moved on again. He knew, I suppose, that when the dogfish had done snapping and tearing at the prey—a dead big fish, most like—morsels of the remnants would sail to the bottom and be his perquisites, or his and the perpetually swarming crabs.

Slowly as he moved on his snail footed way the whelk passed wondrous lurking denizens of the deep: passed an orange crayfish, all feelers and legs, beautiful even in ugliness with the lighted spots, as if they were electric portholes, of lilac down his body; passed beds of flaming, still, cruel anemones, coral, rose, salmon, and pink, waiting their prey; passed a lobster, brilliant, deep, and living there on guard at the mouth of the cave; passed an edible crab, his huge black tipped claws thrust out ready for action, and passed a flock of gurnard, all lying facing one way, all head and fin and mouth.

Of these wonders he took no notice, but at a black bed of mussels, half hidden in sand, he stopped. Fresh meat was better than carrion any time. The only thing was how to get at it.

There were the mussels truly, but there also were the mussels' shells, all hard, all tight shut. What then was the hungry whelk to do, anyway?

Sidling up to one mussel, our whelk applied his mouth to it. That is he fixed on to it as you may see a snail fix on to a piece of cabbage heart. This much was plain, but what followed was not so easy to fathom.

Swift action is not a characteristic of the shell people.

They get there truly, but they get there slowly, so slowly that it is not open to every eye, or within the power of every patience, to see the result.

All that the human eye could detect was the fact that friend whelk was glued to friend mussel, and beyond that—nothing. He just glued there and became as motionless and as deadly uninteresting as friend mussel himself. He just seemed to have shut up and gone to sleep, if these weird creatures ever do sleep. But nature is strange in her ways and very tricky, an elusive and delusive jade, who takes a deal of finding out.

Murder was going on there really between those two; a terrible battle, slow as the wrath of heaven, I grant you, but all the more deadly for that.

Fish passed and repassed, growing, taking vague shape out of the stilly green air—if one may use the word—and as uncannily fading out again. Once it was a flounder rising suddenly from a flat sandy bottom where one could have sworn no living thing was and, swimming on his

flat side, waved himself upward slowly out of sight; once it was a weaver fish, small, spined and deadly, who hustled quickly over the bottom with the insolent lack of caution of one who, as all the sea knows, carries a quiver of poisoned arrows in the shape of his spines; and once it was a shoal of herrings swimming all together like floating specks on the eyes, each one of them reflecting their surrounding and appearing as almost invisible green phantoms, till a ten-pound salmon shot, torpedo fashion, straight at them and they flashed like a sheet of silver as they turned to the right, darting away.

Night came down and added itself to the horrors of this place where peace was not, and nobody ever had any rest from the danger of his foes. The ten-foot circle of light above turned by way of gold to ruby, dulled over to deep green-blue, and paled again to faintly luminous silver—the moon had lighted her magic pathway across the face of the sea.

Dusk had left the whelk still fixed to his mussel, but dawn did not find him there. The shell of the mussel was empty, cleaned out as with a sharp knife, and there was a clear hole right through the solid shell itself when dawn came. And that was the whelk's work. The snail-like one had drilled that hole and eaten the mussel inside. Not bad for a soft creature resembling little more than a big snail, a sea snail, in fact.

The whelk himself was nowhere to be seen, but he was there all the same; buried in the sand not three yards away, and presumably asleep. Moreover, there was a reason for this. The tide was dropping, and it is not good for the smaller people of the sea to be left in the open when the tide falls. Those, therefore, who can not retreat on the wings of a finny tail must perforce dig themselves out of sight if they wish to see another tide. And our whelk knew this, but I can not tell you by what magic he could know that the tide *was* falling, all the same, for there is not always an outgoing current on a falling tide, except in harbors—frequently the reverse, in fact.

Gradually the magic circle of light above sank down, grew brighter and broadened. The shadow of waves above began to play over the sandy floor below, and most of the mussels had vanished. Few fish passed. Most of them had already gone, and those that remained hurried by with heads all pointing one way—out to the sea.

Then the roof of the underworld began gradually to suck down and up, to lift and fall, and there began, there became and grew, just the first faint suspicion of sound, a mere whisper of the grounding waves.

A CRAB, hurrying seaward sidewise, tripped over the three-parts buried whelk, stopped, and began with sidewise scoops of his heavy claws to dig him out, but before he could do any further harm, the roof, the surface which had been bellying threateningly for some time, like the roof of a big marquee in a heavy wind, came down with a vengeance.

There was a blinding glare, a roar, a boiling smother of foam, a blast, as it were, of fresh air, a glimpse of a green impending wall of water, a momentary vision of the crab vanishing—all legs paddling for dear life in a whirling white caldron, and then the sea all round again green as before. It was nothing. Only a wave breaking on the beach, that was all, but I rather fancy it had saved our whelk's life just the same.

Ten minutes later the spiral point of the whelk's shell could just be seen sticking up out of the wet sand along the shore, and the waves were growling and snarling a yard below. The sun was shining and the wind was blowing, drying the sand almost visibly while you looked. The wild cruel cry of a gull rang out from time to time, as the lean, long winged birds beat ceaselessly up and down along the wave line on that terrible white patrol which is the dread of all living along the coast. Heaven help the small marine ones who are once discovered by the relentless keen eyes of the white patrol.

Our whelk, however, was oblivious to all this, tucked coyly in his own fortress, blind to the world. If he had not been he might have noticed that between the ceaseless, hungry, steady patrol of the white gulls above the waves, and that of the spotted and the blue dogfish, and the sharks beneath it, there was not much difference—both were the very embodiment of hungry, prowling terror.

For hours the whelk lay there while the sun rode slowly across the heavens and the wind blew and the sea went out, till hundreds of yards of wet sand lay between our shelly hero and the little waves that tripped and fell with a soft murmur far away.

A man, a shrimper with bare feet, luckily passed with the quick, almost running strides, peculiar to professional shrimpers, and trod on the whelk but did not hurt him; a man with shod feet went by and left a heel mark within an inch of the spiral shell, and a big herring gull came with pattering feet—the whelk could feel the vibration of those as well as the men's—and, picking up a mussel, rose and dropped it within a yard of him, so that he could, if he had been peeping out, have seen it smashed to pieces.

Still the hours passed slowly by and the sea began to come back once more.

A rook, waddling along as rooks do, espied the pointed spiral of the shell sticking up and tapped it, but a wandering dog chased the rook away and, stopping, herself snuffed at the shell, dug it up, turned it over with her nose, picked it up, played with it, and dropped it to bark at the waves, now once again only a dozen yards away.

There it lay, that spiral shell curled right handed—for nature is nearly always right handed—the brownish handsome shell with its ribbed surface looking even at a short distance like nothing but a lump of sand, as doubtless its owner without knowing why or how, meant it to look—or nature did for him.

On came the waves, like the proverbial snail, not gaining at every stride, dropping back at some indeed, but gaining on the whole.

Then—oh, horror—a big gull, one of the dread white patrol, sailing over on still wings, gliding by on rigid narrow pinions just to have one last examination of the sand to make sure that nothing had been overlooked before the sea covered it, saw that big whelk shell lying there exposed and alone. He flung up, checked, swept round on a half circle and, with a quick series of zig-zag dives, shot down.

Eight yards away a wave grounded with an *A-r-r-r-g-h-h—boomp!* and the spent waters shot up in little seething ripples within a yard of the shell.

Oh, whelk, whelk!

The big gull skipped grotesquely out of the way of the waves and examined the shell, first with one eye, then with the other. It was full then. He had sense enough to be able to tell *that.*

A-r-r-r-g-h-h—boomp growled another wave, tripping and falling sprawling up the beach, flinging his wet arms abroad so that the last of the spent water, an inch deep, crept up to within nine inches of gull and shell.

Oh, whelk, couldn't you have moved and run for it! Only nine inches, just nine short inches to the water, and the wave would have done the rest—the wave would have rolled and sucked you, its child, back and down to the deep. But moving meant opening, and—well, the mollusc in the shell knew best after all, perhaps.

Swiftly the gull bent down, his spotless white head flashing in the sun. Quickly he seized the shell with a swift patter of webbed feet, took a little run forward, and rose.

Oh, whelk!

With wings beating up he swept to a height of perhaps forty feet. Then he stopped and, with wings still flapping, opened his beak.

Down came the whelk, dropping like a stone, and hit the sand with a soft *thop.* And down came the gull quickly after it. He had meant to smash the shell and so

get at the goodly succulent meal inside, but he should have dropped it on something harder than soft sand to do that, and he should not have forgotten the sea.

The shell, as a matter of fact, was not broken. It was only cracked, and it had fallen far nearer the waves than it had been before.

A-r-r-r-g-h-h—bomp! thundered a big wave and, shooting a cascade of foam far up the beach, completely covered the whelk's shell.

DOWN came the gull in a hurry, settled, and grabbed at the shell, missed it, and as it began to roll faster and faster toward the sea, drawn down on the suck of the receding waters, chased it, pattering up to his breast nearly, pecking and digging vainly after his vanishing prize. It was a grotesque sight, much like a man chasing across a street after his hat, which has blown off, and it was about as successful.

A-r-r-r-g-h-h—bomp! roared the next wave, turning over in a solid jade green wall almost on top of the desperate gull, who had just barely time to open his wings and scuttle, half running, half flying, with the wave snarling like a hungry dog at his heels. And when he turned at last the whelk shell had disappeared—snatched by Father Neptune back into the cruel, mysterious green underworld that was his home.

Ten minutes later we find the whelk shell in the dread, still, silent underworld of the sea as before, motionless as before and—*cracked.* Perhaps the whelk inside was not feeling well. One wonders how a whelk with a cracked shell does feel, if he does feel? But I can not tell you the answer.

Anyway, there he was, but there he did not stay. Perhaps a current took him. Perhaps he deliberately sought one. I can not say. Only this I know: By daybreak he was a good way out from the shore, beyond any fear of falling tide at any rate, and among a scattered colony of mussels with whom were encamped a few oysters. Whether he was there by chance or not none can say, but remembering the other little affair of the mussel, one might guess not.

Be these things as they may, it is certain that our whelk was busy. He was in fact building, and at the same time mending the crack his house had received at the hands, or more correctly, at the beak of the gull, the day before.

Now people think that mollusc's shells *grow.* They don't. They are *made*—deliberately and scientifically built up with a trowel, whose other name is a kind of hardened outer skin, by the owner of the shell, whenever he or she thinks it requires it. Thus then you behold our whelk building: You see him applying this mantle, or outer skin, or trowel, or whatever you please to call it of his, all along the crack in the shell and with it and from it apply the cement, the lime secreted in his body after having first been "subtracted" from the sea, all along the crack till he had not only completely and very neatly filled that crack up, and in case any unforeseen weakness might develop at this spot, he added an inner layer of lime cement, a strap as it were, to make all safe. In a short while that would harden and be shell.

Next our whelk turned his attention to enlarging his home. He was already big and his shell large, but emergencies of growth bade him make it larger. He could not afford, like many who are not whelks, to grow too big for his boots, so to speak. Naturally his method was to go on where he left off last, that is at the bottom of the last and largest spiral. He applied his outer skin, or natural trowel, and deposited lime as before. Time and the action of the sea water would harden his cement and color it as it had done the rest.

He worked right handed and so precisely that not even a gage measuring to a hundredth of an inch would have found him out. And remember this, for it is the greatest marvel of all: He had to preserve the perfect contour of his shell, to keep the beautiful sweep of the spiral,

to construct the same just so much larger than the last, and above all to hold fast to the species type, and not to make a cockle's shell, or a winkle's, an oyster's shell, or the shell of a razoe fish, but to adhere strictly to the plan laid down by his ancestors, although working with, so far as I can gather, precisely the same material as mussel, cockle, oyster and company, though possibly not with the same shaped trowel.

Rome was not built in a day, and our whelk did not carry out the addition and repairs to his fortress instantly. Possibly his supply of lime cement on hand was not enough for the whole job, and he had to pause at intervals for periods of unbroken meditation while his body, or gills, or stomach, or something extracted the lime from the water and his food. Meantime he decreased the population of mussels around him, and it may well be, indeed it seems very much more than possible, that he obtained a good deal at least of his lime from them, seeing that they too were shell makers.

You could see, of course, what he had been up to by the empty mussel shells lying about with holes bored clean through them, and only a whelk could do that. But when the dawn came again, and the ten-foot circle of light above glowed all dazzling white and gold, it could be seen also that there were other empty mussel shells lying about which had not been empty the evening before, and there was no hole through them. They were empty and cleaned out as conscientiously as if a man had done the job.

The whelk had just completed a period of motionless, tight-shut-upedness, brought about by the passage and rather indelicate attentions of a young porpoise up-ended like a bottle, nosing the bottom and looking apparently for the fish that he seemed unable either to see or to smell unless they swam, and had but just come partly out of his shell to crawl to yet another mussel when something else moved right in his path. It had not been there the evening before, that new horror without a face, or head, and it was quite unlike any other living thing about—if indeed it *was* living, and one would have been hard put to it to swear that, for it was much like some plant thing, or cactus.

If the whelk had anything to say in the matter, heaven send that it might not stop there a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. The thing was a starfish—five fingered, bright colored and flabby. It had been lying over and almost covering a mussel. Before it came there that mussel had been alive and healthy and fat; but not after.

After the starfish had done with it it was a wide open, empty shell. And what is more, there was another starfish two yards away covering up an oyster, and when an hour later it was seen that the starfish was lying some inches away from it that oyster shell also was open and empty.

Our whelk, however, who doubtless was not such a fool that he knew nothing about starfish, knew nothing about the starfish in front of him. It was not very close, and he had not seen it move, a fact which was not surprising since one could not see it move oneself. But it got away some inches from the mussel during that day, all the same.

NOW the whelk, being full fed and desiring rest and meditation while the lime and cement formed within him for the finishing touch to his labor of enlarging the premises, as the shopkeepers say, half sunk himself in sand, withdrew from the world and its alarms, and shut himself up all tight and comfy for a space. And you can take my word for it, when a whelk is so shut up nothing much short of a hammer and chisel is going to get him out again, till he wants to come.

Now it must have been some time in the darkness of the night—and every night is awfully dark, and must be a nerve shattering nightmare down there under the sea—that the starfish moved over to and discovered our whelk. Some sort of creature, which must have been a lobster or crayfish or a great crab, had

just passed over him, its armor plated limbs scraping hollowly on the roof of the shell as it went, and some fish thing—possibly a skate—had just finished trying to nose, or dig, or shuffle him out of his sandbed, when he was aware of the soft blanketing, flabby mass of the starfish creeping upon him.

Had he been anything else than a mollusc and cursed, like the Russian peasant, with a fatalistic torpor that bid him sit down and suffer like a martyr, he would have fought in that moment like the very devil. This is true, because he knew that once the starfish was upon him he might as well say his prayers, he, she, or it—upon my word I can not tell the difference among these uncanny plant-like horrors—being a person of peculiarly insinuating and deadly powers.

Slowly the starfish slid its peculiar legs over the prettily twisted whorl of the ribbed shell—feeling, feeling, feeling. Oh, the horror and deliberation of that half alive thing with a brain! Then it stopped moving. The odd legs had found what they sought, had gripped their sucker feet on through the valves which are to the whelk shut in his shell what his air-tube is to the diver shut in his helmet under water.

Then the abomination in orange leather was still. It did not move. Nothing appeared to happen. But something very lively was happening, really. The starfish was sucking, slowly, inexorably pulling, pitting its strength against the strength of the whelk and, so far as I can make out, though I may be wrong, doing its best to suffocate the whelk into opening at last for very lack of air, or whatever it is that the whelk breathes.

It was not a nice battle, and to watch would have given you the creeps—oh, yes, given you the creeps all over. It was so beastly still, so slow, so deadly and so terrifyingly lifeless. Yet it did not last long. The end was never really in doubt, for all that our whelk was a particularly large and strong one, and for all that one would have expected a creature which drilled through mussel shells as easily as any gimlet, and lived habitually upon the slaughter of others, to have easily made short work of a flabby, slow, unarmored thing like a starfish. But he didn't. He opened helplessly, opened wide, and gave himself up to be slaughtered without apparently—though I may be wrong here—putting up any decent fight at all.

Then—and then—! Well, look here, this isn't a fairy tale, but the fact is that starfish took out his, her, or its own stomach, put it into the whelk's shell, and—that was the end of our whelk, shall we say, to put it politely.

When at last the starfish had done, had, in short, taken back its stomach and placed it within itself where it properly belonged, and went its way, the whelk shell lay empty and polished on the bottom of the sea—just a shell, and nothing more.

And that, one would have thought, was the end of it, but it was not by any manner of means the end of it.

Day dawned and with it the circle of light above, which was all the day those denizens of the deep ever saw; unless they went up to look, and that, it was generally accepted in finny society down there, was not a healthy thing to do, for there were plenty of foes above, as well as below.

MANY came to sniff—if one may use the word in regard to fish—at the empty shell with its bottom up, to make quite certain that it was empty, one presumes. A beautiful red mullet, like a fish cut out of fine coral, he came; a conger eel, very dark and as thick as a man's arm, she came; a ray, flat, like a frying pan, and with a whip-like, wickedly spined tail, waved up out of the green haze and waved away again; a shoal of whiting, looking just the same as we know them on the fishmongers' slabs, and apparently all ready to have their tails tucked into their mouths, floated around it for a minute, and a couple of prawns, with all legs paddling like war canoes, and looking very different to how we know them,

and almost transparent as glass—so that you could see what last they had for dinner—floated up and poked their beautifully delicate slender little finger-like pincers up into the cavity of the spiral of the shell in the vain optimistic hope that the murderer, whoever he was, had left some microscopic scraps for poor humble little prawns to clear up.

But never an atom had the deadly starfish left, he, she or it, who, once commenced, never leaves anything, and the prawns were just going to launch once again on their hazardous paddling course through that green treacherous world of theirs, when, suddenly, they rose hastily like birds that have been disturbed at a feast, and faded out—they were transparent, remember—against the circle of intense light above.

Something was approaching deliberately but with keen intent along the sandy floor.

Looking at this thing at first most people would have said that it was an anemone walking. A second glance might have produced the corrected statement that it was another, and a smaller, whelk. On the other hand, a third scrutiny would have brought out the opinion that it was a crab. In short, what the devil was it? It was in fact none of these three things. And it was all these three things.

This is not perhaps lucid, but quite correct as far as it goes, for it was in effect a crab inside a whelk's shell with a gay pink anemone, a real live big sea anemone atop—the whole, the complete menagerie, I say, sailing under the style and title of Hermit Crab and Co, and please be sure not to leave out the "and Co" because without them there would have been no hermit crab. They were indeed the shareholders that found the capital, and he was the—what shall we say?—the management.

We can understand this almost at once, because at that moment a shadow fell across the golden floor of the sea at that spot, and there came sliding down a shape big, burly and terrible. Straight for the hermit crab it made, developing from a shape into a great fish as it eliminated itself from the green luminous shadows—a cod, I think, of many, many pounds' weight.

The hermit crab's stalk-like eyes saw him coming. The hermit crab drew back in his second hand whelk's shell; the hermit crab threw himself into the approved crab fighting pose—heavy, business-like pincers put up and out and ready. But *that* would not have saved him. Nor would the stolen shell of a whelk have guarded his life. The fish could have crunched him up, shell and all, as you or I would crunch a peppermint. It was the anemone that did it, the anemone that saved him, and—the anemone did *nothing*. No, if it pleases you, it did nothing, but its brilliant color did. The flaming pink flashed to the big staring eyes of the fish when he was barely two feet away, and had already his terrible mouth open. He saw, and it might have been a danger signal that he saw. It was, too, for he paused fractionally, then, with a ponderous swish, heaved half over—his great slab sides flashing wondrously in the reflection from the surface—and with a heavy flaunt of his great tail that set the sand dancing in a pillar-like cloud and the delicate pink fronds of the seaweeds waving to and fro, he swept to one side and glided majestically away into the green fog from whence he had come.

Not for nothing, you observe, was the anchored sea anemone so wonderfully and vividly appareled. It was nasty to taste, abominable to taste, and all the world of the sea and his wife knew it, and the anemone was dressed like that in order that, knowing it, no one should have the slightest chance of making a mistake, and uselessly killing it out of hand before they discovered its nauseous flavor.

Oh, yes, the anemone had its uses for the hermit crab, even though it did exact a very heavy toll of his food, and weigh the deuce of a lot to carry about on the top of his stolen house. It must have saved his life a good few times as it was, and might do so again, for which the lit-

tle matter of finding it food, and moving one who was nearly a fixture—a movable fixture—from place to place that it might obtain itself, as well as share in his, food was not indeed a heavy dividend to pay at all.

Having got rid of the danger of the big fish—he ran the gantlet of dangers such as these practically every day of the week, and was unaffected by them—the hermit crab proceeded on that deliberate, dogged, and in a fashion terrifying, sidelong way peculiar to crabs. He advanced on the big whelk shell with caution—caution being always and above all necessary to the people of the underworld of the sea.

He was going to do battle for that shell, as he had done battle for the smaller shell which he now carried. This was necessary because he had no shell of his own as most crabs have, possessing only a long soft body that was good to eat. He had, therefore, to capture some more fortunate creature's shell, or be eaten. The trouble was, however, that he was growing too big for the present whelk's shell in which he now lived and, like some nations, wanted a larger one with more room to expand, so to speak.

Careful and stealthy as a cat, he approached the shell, lifted each of his plated legs one at a time and placed it down again with deliberate caution, his big, murderous looking pincers held well out in front.

Ten minutes it took him to execute that stalk, and then, quick as a flash, and absolutely unexpectedly, he rushed and, almost before you could wink, had seized the shell and driven one deadly pincer deep into the mouth of the shell, feeling for the inmate. But, as we know, there was no inmate, and he had just made quite sure of this fact with his peculiar whip-like feelers, when, without the slightest warning at all, something that must have been hiding and watching all the time, rushed out from behind a clump of seaweed and was upon him in a little whirlwind—pardon, or whirlwater rather—of sand.

Those who have gained their impression of crabs by watching their usual deliberate slow movements should have seen our hermit crab in that instant. He whipped round quick as light and flung up his claws just in time to guard off the savage, round arm dig of another hermit crab's claws. He, too, it seemed, was desirous of moving into more commodious quarters.

When crabs fight they do so to kill, or be killed, and if they come off with no worse hurt than the loss of a limb—it will grow again—they think themselves lucky. Any fight less deadly than that is a mild discussion. And there these crabs fought and the spectacle was not nice to watch; it was too passionless, too deliberately wicked, too much like the fighting of clockwork things to be even exciting, and became instead frankly ghastly.

They struck round arm fashion with their hooked, pointed pincers and the blows fell off the rounded shells, or were parried by the broad tosses of the enemy's pincers with a sound, if you could have heard it down there, like tapping hollow horn. They aimed with the point to get in under the armor of the foe—in, in to the soft skin and, laying hold there, to pull, and wrench, and twist, and tug till something gave way. Oh, they were demons incarnate, I can tell you.

No one saw the end of that fight because a merciful night came down and drew a curtain of blue-black across the scene, and it was as well, perhaps, because when the day dawned again all clear green and gold down there, our hermit crab was sidling away with our own big whelk's shell on his back, to which the sea anemone had also in some soulless, miraculous fashion of its own transferred itself during the night, and the discarded whelk's shell was lying empty on the sand behind them.

And the other hermit crab? Oh, he, what was left of him, was being discussed by a party of prawns in a seaweed patch, all except one claw, and that was being waved aloft in the writhing tentacles of that pink devil, the sea anemone.

By ARED WHITE

A Story of the Military Intelligence

The DUEL at

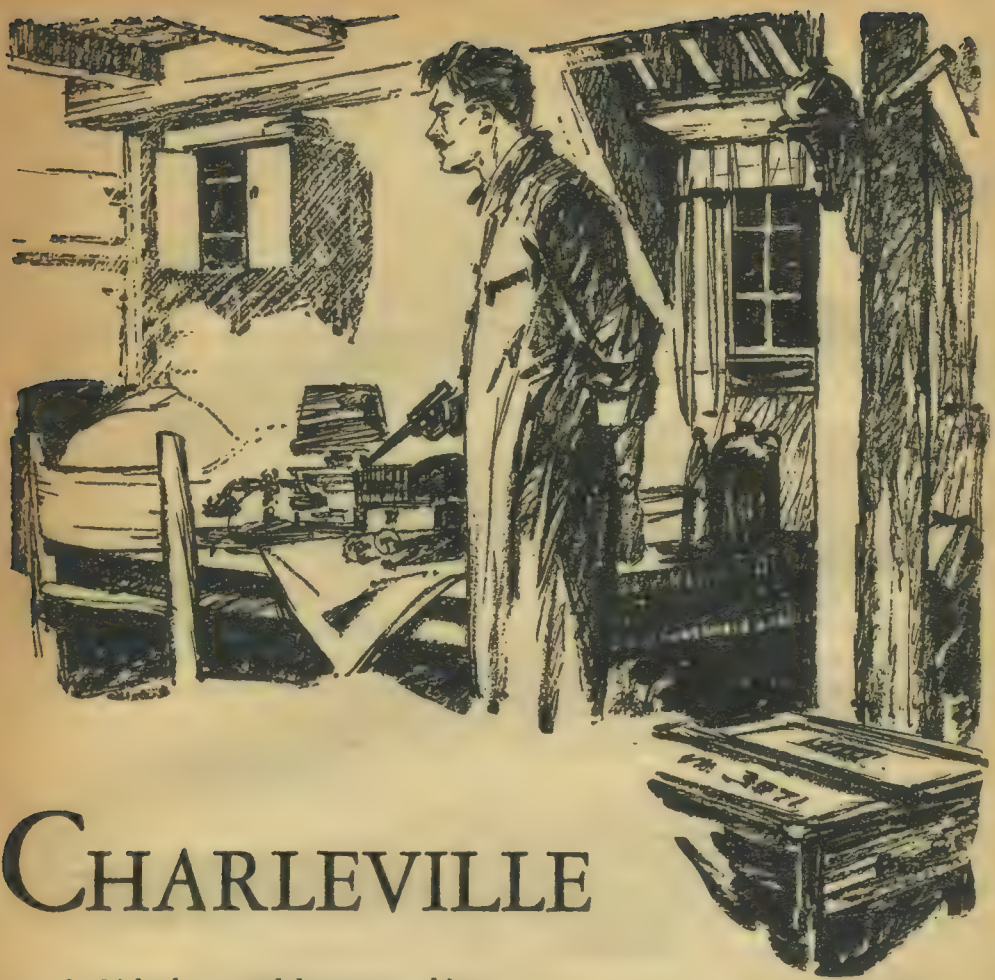
AS THE Count and the Countess de Baudreville were escorted by a gilded major-domo to their box at the annual cavalry show there was a noticeable stir in the brilliant assemblage at the Grand Palais, a polite craning of necks, a murmur of voices. No greater interest had attended the arrival, a few minutes before, of a former premier of France and the wartime commander of a French army corps.

Colonel Ourq clutched my arm. He was leaning forward, his eyes fixed intently upon the couple.

"I request, monsieur," he said in a low voice, without turning his head, "that tonight you will observe carefully the Commandant Comte and the Comtesse Henri de Baudreville. Anon I shall give you my reasons and ask your thoughts."

But it required no mandate from Colonel Ourq, the celebrated operative of the French wartime secret service, to center my attention upon the Count de Baudreville. Even without his unusual face and carriage, the French major commanded immediate attention by reason of his decorations. About his neck was the pendant of a Commander of the Legion of Honor, while across his breast was a solid row of high decorations. The *Medaille Militaire*, the Order of Leopold, the Italian Cross, the Order of the Bath, French War Cross with two palms, the American Distinguished Service Medal. A second row underneath, of lesser decorations, stretched full across the left side of his blouse.

De Baudreville was growing into middle age. There was frost at his temples, and the military erectness of his trim, lean body had become that of a ramrod. His long, angular face reflected in a strange way that crimson period of war madness



CHARLEVILLE

out of which those medals came to him. The extraordinary poise of his features was that of a death mask, and there was a pallor under his olive skin, a level, unchanging set to the small black eyes under straight abrupt brows that suggested a man who lived without emotion, a man whose soul was dead. A sinister face, rather than a heroic one, which the years since the Armistice had not mellowed against whatever memories were locked behind that grim mask.

The Countess de Baudreville was perhaps ten years the major's junior, a woman of remarkable beauty, with hair of burnished gold, exquisite patrician features and large haunted eyes that were as blue as the sky over Paris in June. Yet something of her distinguished husband's somber humor had fallen upon her. Her face was placid and without vitality, her eyes cold and detached, her whole manner reserved and joyless.

"The major is one of your great war heroes?" I suggested to Colonel Ourq. "The commander of a shock battalion, perhaps?"

The wartime secret service chief lifted his brows and shoulders.

"He had no command, monsieur," he replied. "A staff officer who was hardly exposed to fire."

"But his decorations, my Colonel—

some of them are for gallantry," I reminded Colonel Ourq.

"No living man," said Ourq, "has done more for France. No man performed more valuable service under most unbelieved circumstances. And yet—"

He broke off with another shrug of his thick shoulders. The finest horses of the French cavalry were trotting about the ring. Difficult hurdles were being set in place by scurrying attendants. But Colonel Ourq's eyes were fixed upon the immobile mask that was the Commandant Comte de Baudreville.

"Your thoughts, monsieur?" Ourq spoke up presently. "Now that you have observed the commandant, you have been affected pleasantly by his appearance, yes?"

"Frankly, my Colonel, the effect upon me was rather—well, unpleasant. I can't tell you why, but there's something, an intangible something about him that I don't like."

"*Voilà!*" exclaimed Ourq with evident satisfaction.

He removed his monocle, polished it thoughtfully with the under surface of his cravat and replaced it to his eye.

"I can not say how far we may trust our intuitions," he added enigmatically. "Nor even a woman's intuitions. We must always remember that the war changed many men strangely—but yet without making them over entirely."

Colonel Ourq turned away from the Commandant Comte de Baudreville with an abrupt movement of his head and centered his attention upon the magnificent chargers that were being put through their paces by gaily uniformed young officers of the French cavalry. Nor did he again mention the subject of De Baudreville during the evening, though I knew from olden days that the subject was not gone from his mind, that something more than a passing fancy was behind his inordinate interest in the magnificently decorated officer and his beautiful wife.

It was at the colonel's château at Levallois-Perret, the ancestral home of the Ourqs of a dozen generations, that he returned suddenly to the subject, two days thereafter. Then, with characteristic directness and thoroughness, he bared the whole subject. Not as a matter of gossip, but because he must unbosom himself of an inscrutable mystery that had been tormenting him for years, and because he wanted a detached opinion placed upon his own thoughts and conclusions.

There was, behind Colonel Ourq's amazing narrative, months of painstaking research of every detail, every scrap of the record. He had spent days with the reticent De Baudreville exacting the astounding account of his adventures. Three clandestine visits to Germany and to the châteaux in Northern France, that once had quartered German headquarters staffs during the critical final stages of the war, contributed to the tangible sum total of his information.

In the hours that the French espionage chieftain spoke in his fast moving official monotone, he reenacted one of the most unbelievable chapters of the war. A black chapter out of the red welter of those harried days when the destiny of France hung in the balance. And in the end I came to understand those decorations on the breast of the Commandant Comte de Baudreville—and, to my own complete satisfaction, that dead face on the trim shoulders of De Baudreville, and the joyless expression of the lovely Comtesse.

II

COLONEL OURQ'S story was amazing, and I repeat its details in my own way:

"My Colonel, a favor, if you will?"

The immaculate young cavalry lieutenant stood before the colonel's desk in an easy posture, a nonchalant lid drooping over one eye while the other observed his commander with assurance through a rimless monocle.

There was the sharp annoyance of a man whose patience is at the snapping point in the curt jerk of Colonel Ourq's head as he faced his subordinate.

"The usual one, I suppose, De Baudreville," drawled Colonel Ourq, disagreeably.

"But yes, my Colonel," assented De Baudreville. He bared his white teeth in a placid smile. "Perhaps the Colonel forgets that it is a fortnight since I have been to Vincennes, and Madame le Comtesse writes that we are having guests over the weekend, my Colonel."

"It is no time to be thinking of such things, De Baudreville," exclaimed Colonel Ourq. "*Mon Dieu*, but have you forgot that the Boche storm hovers over Paris? There are Frenchmen who have not been home in months, please to remember."

The lieutenant gave an indifferent shrug of his shoulders.

"Very well, my Colonel," he said. "I will so inform my guest, Monsieur d'Aubervilliers. I know he will be disappointed. But, *c'est la guerre!*"

"Make the most of it this time, De Baudreville," stormed Ourq, while the smile on the cavalryman's lips spread slightly. "It may be your last visit home in many fortnights—and you will so inform your family!"

"*Merci bien, mon Colonel*," said De Baudreville. He held his hand lightly at the vizor of his cap for a moment and smiled again when the superior did not acknowledge the salute. "I am certain madame and D'Aubervilliers will appreciate your thoughtfulness."

Ourq's teeth were set as he watched the impertinent staff pet go out into the Place de la Concorde. He suppressed an impulse to call after De Baudreville and cancel the pass.

"An intolerable young *embusqué!*" he muttered to himself as he turned back to his littered desk.

Embusqué! That was rapidly becoming the favorite epithet of the officers at Paris when they spoke of De Baudreville. Most of them were throwbacks from the Front, men with from one to half a dozen wounds, no longer fit for active fighting. Yet in this, the fourth year of the war, here was that precious young *embusqué* without his baptism of fire. While his comrades suffered through long black months at the seething Front, he was forever content with this soft detail far behind the lines.

There were those who said he used his influence to keep himself in his soft berth. Just as he had used the name of D'Aubervilliers, power in the Chambre des Députés, to goad a reluctant weekend pass from the unwilling Ourq. Yet they did not ascribe his weakness to sheer physical fear, but rather to his mad love for his beautiful young wife, the countess. Often they had observed De Baudreville sitting at his desk for hours with his eyes fixed upon a small picture of the countess which he carried about with him in a small silver locket. Certain it was that no man in France had greater cause for wishing to live. Youth, position, wealth, the most beautiful wife in all Paris.

If De Baudreville ever sensed these whisperings, they did not stir him into any insistence upon Front Line duty. He seemed only too richly content with his assignment to the French secret service at Paris. And since De Baudreville had a certain gift for counter-espionage operations, deep intuitions, well controlled emotions, a logical and orderly mind as well as abundant energy and imagination, Colonel Ourq was well enough satisfied to ignore the whisperings and hold the lieutenant as an operative.

"An intolerable young *embusqué!*" Ourq repeated through his teeth as De Baudreville disappeared. He turned his reproach upon himself. "I was a fool for letting him have his way again!"

But a few days later Colonel Ourq changed his mind about this. It was that weekend pass to the ancient De Baudreville château near Vincennes that changed the whole course of De Baudreville's career. Perhaps—who can say?—changed the whole course of history!

On Sunday morning the young Frenchman was riding with the countess and their guest, D'Aubervilliers, along the road that skirts the Château Fort de Vincennes. Crews of German prisoners from the fort's stockade stood back from

their work to yield the road to the passers, who gave them never a glance. The countryside flaunted the brilliant garments of approaching summer; the air was freighted with the fragrance of early June. To these three riders, astride the finest hunters from the famous stables of De Baudreville, the crimson tempest that gathered on the Marne was some hideous unreality, a barbarous omen of the distance, a haunting threat to be shut out of mind this morning.

Then one of the German prisoners detached himself from the roadside and presented himself stiffly beside De Baudreville's hunter.

"Herr Oberst Leutnant," pleaded the German in a hoarse whisper, "in the name of God tell us what news! Give us some hope that soon we are to be delivered from the French swine."

The count drew rein, glared at the fellow for an instant and struck him a violent blow across the face with his riding crop. The German winced at the sting, which brought a purple welt to his face. But he did not give ground or show resentment.

"I understand, Herr Oberst Leutnant von Kettwig," the soldier persisted. "You must be very cautious—so the pigs will think you have but stopped to question me. But, *lieber Gott*, we are desperate men for some word of hope!"

De Baudreville struck again, a blow that brought a second welt to chasten the fellow for his insolence, and rode on without a word.

The countess, as if drawn by some strange premonition, pivoted in her saddle at the identical moment De Baudreville was accosted. She witnessed the incident and turned with a suddenly troubled face to her husband as he rode up to join her.

"What was it, Henri?" she inquired anxiously.

"Nothing, my dear," he told her with a smile. "A mere impertinence."

"But did he not seem to think you were some one—?"

"A mere impertinence," repeated De Baudreville. He cast his temper aside with a laugh. "Perhaps I should not lose my patience with the sly rascal. If I had but listened to his patter out of curiosity, in a moment he would have begged for cigarets or a few francs, which was his only thought."

"Oh," said the countess, her eyes still reflecting an anxious intuition.

Then, in a moment, she too put the incident aside without further thought and responded to the mood of the June morning.

IN THE week that followed there was a mysterious something in the air at headquarters of the French Second Section at Paris that De Baudreville sensed without being able to fathom. An important spy case given him on Monday was cancelled Tuesday after he had made detailed preparations to take the trail into the underworld of Paris disguised as an Apache.

Colonel Ourq appeared to avoid him and answered his salutes formally, in a humor of grim preoccupation. On Wednesday and Thursday the lieutenant merely marked time in his office, under orders to stand by and await instructions.

It was Saturday morning when the chief of the espionage service summoned De Baudreville. Colonel Ourq was sitting hunched back in his chair. His weary eyes fixed themselves upon the officer in a hard, unfathomable scrutiny.

"It is, after all, my dear Lieutenant," he said in a low, even voice, "a most fortunate circumstance, perhaps, that I yielded a week ago to your entreaties for pass."

"*Bien, mon Colonel!*" exclaimed De Baudreville. He smiled more comfortably as his mind raced to the obvious conclusion that some favor was now to be sought of the powerful D'Aubervilliers. "A most gracious kindness on the Colonel's part, to be sure."

Ourq slid forward in his chair, took a photograph from the top of his desk and handed it to the lieutenant.

"You may study this picture a moment," he said in the same somber voice. "You may tell me what it suggests to you."

De Baudreville's monocle slipped from his eye and shattered on the floor. Yet he did not appear to be conscious of the loss as he stood gaping at the photograph. His own picture, or that of his own astounding counterpart, in the uniform of the Prussian Guard. Even to the large rimless monocle, it was De Baudreville in cut of feature, in a certain hauteur of expression. One slight difference alone appeared. The man in the picture wore a somewhat larger and more bristling mustache than did De Baudreville.

"The Lieutenant-Colonel Otto von Kettwig," Ourq interrupted presently.

"Von Kettwig!" De Baudreville glanced sharply at his chief. "Why that's the name of the—"

"Precisely," snapped Ourq. "The man you were mistaken for on the road south of the Château Fort de Vincennes last Sunday."

"My Colonel has heard of that, then?" puzzled De Baudreville.

"Fortunately, you related the incident at the mess—and some one who recognized its possible importance brought the fact to my attention."

"It's importance, monsieur? I do not understand."

"Von Kettwig is the assistant operations chief of staff of a German group of armies. You, my dear De Baudreville, are going to take his place."

It was several moments before the ordinarily contained De Baudreville was able to collect himself and find his voice. The blood was gone from his face, his eyes were stark and staring as he read that his chief spoke in deadly earnest.

"I—I've never heard of such a thing as that attempted, my Colonel!" he responded in a thin, protesting voice.

"Many times, my dear Lieutenant," Ourq rejoined quickly. "I can quote you a dozen cases. An ancient game, where circumstances offer such a rare opportunity."

"My Colonel, you mean you would send a De Baudreville disguised into the enemy lines—a spy!"

Ourq's face became hard as steel; the cold glint in his eyes deepened.

"You forget, De Baudreville, that you have not despised the secret service through four hard years of war, in which your comrades have suffered much. Now you have an opportunity for service that—"

"But that would mean working as—as a spy in the enemy's—"

"Destiny has placed this weapon in our hands," Colonel Ourq cut him off. "In this critical hour when we must know the German plans, must rob him of his weapon of surprise attack, your life or that of no other man is to be considered for an instant, De Baudreville. Will you accept the mission with a whole heart?"

"I must—must have time to think—my Colonel," stammered De Baudreville through purple lips. A greedy eagerness flashed into his eyes, a touch of color mounted his cheeks. "On Monday you will have my answer—on Monday if I may but have until then in which to think at my home, my Colonel."

"De Baudreville!"

Colonel Ourq was on his feet, head pushed forward, his voice the thrust of a rapier.

"Not another instant, De Baudreville. Already they call you *embusqué*. It will be decided in your next breath—whether a De Baudreville hesitates when France calls. Make your choice, my Lieutenant!"

The bellows upon smoldering embers was the response in the young officer's eyes to the challenge of Colonel Ourq. They grew swiftly into glowing coals, the blood suffused his pallid face, his posture stiffened into a rigid erectness, and he raised his hand to the vizor of his cap.

"For France, my Colonel," he said in a low, contained voice. "I am ready."

Two weeks of careful preparation followed. It was not an adventure for hasty action. Every move had to be considered. De Baudreville's mustache had

to have an opportunity to grow to the right proportions so that it might be waxed at the proper Von Kettwig angle. There had to be conferences and rehearsals of every detail. Photographs searched; the latest information on Von Kettwig's habits. A smart field uniform of a German lieutenant-colonel of the great staff, with appropriate insignia. A scar that appeared on Von Kettwig's upper forehead had to be stimulated, by searing with a hot iron. Two touches of gold under bicuspids. A careful touching up of De Baudreville's Berlin accent, his knowledge of German tactics and technique.

More conferences on the plan of placing the Frenchman in the Prussian's shoes. A simple but desperate plan, upon which the best minds of the secret service agreed without dissent. By plane to Charleville at night. Thence to Kettwig's billet, where De Baudreville must deal unpleasantly with his unfortunate counterpart while the Oberst Leutnant slept.

De Baudreville gasped and turned deathly pale at this detail.

"To kill a man like a rat while he sleeps?" he protested. "*Le bon Dieu, messieurs!*"

"It is very distressing, my Lieutenant," said Ourq coolly. "But what is a life when we must shield the heart of France from the fangs of a mad wolf? It is for France you go, and the *bon Dieu* will bless your acts."

The most imposing conference of all considered the information he was to bring back. The battle plans in detail for the drive against Paris. Already, from American and British operatives, it had been learned that there impended the last desperate thrust for a German victory. But the exact date, the strength of assault masses, of massed reserves? The map point of the German main blow? The strength of the artillery preparation? To learn these dark secrets of the Prussian high command was De Baudreville's mission.

When the last detail had been decided at final conference, the general commanding at Paris placed his hand softly on the young officer's shoulder.

"We do not deceive ourselves, my Lieutenant," he said solemnly, "of the chances for your success. They are not great. But if you succeed, your service to France will be immortal. If you fail, your memory will never die in the hearts of your countrymen. I congratulate you upon your great opportunity to serve France."

De Baudreville drew himself to salute. His eyes were moist but there was a light behind the tears that was not of weakness. De Baudreville the *embusqué* was no more.

"For France, my General," he replied.

AT CHARLEVILLE, shortly after midnight, alarm gongs beat in the quarters of the headquarters police, buzzers sang under officers' beds in billets of the intelligence service. Hustling under-officers rubbed sleepy eyes and barked guttural commands at skurrying black figures.

"To the north, and the edge of the village!" cried an officer who already had the word from the sentinels.

"A ruse, Herr Leutnant. It skinned the ground on to the west at high speed!" came a correction out of the darkness.

Platoons rushed in loose formation to the critical points with fixed bayonets and magazines filled. Squads went to street intersections in the village and scattered into a searching vigil of back streets and alleyways.

It was a German plane that had come over, the German engines identifying themselves by their broken bursts of sound so that there had been no alarm wired ahead from the Front. But that it had shut off its engine and glided to a landing at the edge of Charleville, that was a most suspicious circumstance. A spy landing, perhaps. In any event every precaution must be taken. If the Allies had sneaked a secret service operative across the lines, the skulker must be

rounded up as quickly as possible, to be stood against a wall for his audacity.

The platoon that jolted to the north was deploying when a dark figure loomed out of the starlight. A lynx eyed picket challenged, a lieutenant caught the alarm and dashed forward with drawn pistol and flashlight to investigate.

"It skimmed to the east, Herr Leutnant. Make certain you guard in that direction!"

The silhouette in the night barked his command. But that was a simple enough ruse. The lieutenant marched up to the man, pistol alert, and cast the rays of his flashlight in the other's face. It was a small pocket light, which the officer was compelled to move about over the man's features. The German gave a sharp gasp.

"*Entschuldigen sie mir, Herr Oberst Leutnant von Kettwig!*" he cried clapping his heels together and lifting his hand to the vizor of his garrison cap. "We heard a plane land."

"*Ja*, a plane. It landed finally to the north," snapped the officer. "A spy landing, I suspect. I ran in time to see that it did not stop where it came down. You will hurry!"

De Baudreville returned the German's salute casually and walked on into the village. A few moments later he heard the droning of motors in the distance to the north. A plane took to the air. The night was sliced to ribbons by restless fingers of light that took up a hurried search of the sky. But the pilot made his getaway, circling to the north.

A simple ruse they had executed. The plane had shut down long enough for De Baudreville to leap to the ground, then taxied on at ever increasing speed to the west of the village where it had come to a full stop to draw attention away from De Baudreville's landing. It had been simple enough then for De Baudreville to outwit the German police lieutenant. And though the Germans must know by certain now that a spy had landed from France, the headquarters operations staff would be the last place in Charleville that they would think to search for him tomorrow, when counter-espionage operatives took up the empty trail.

It was a walk of only a few minutes to Von Kettwig's billet in the center of the village, a small stone house which the operations sub-chief occupied with a single orderly. De Baudreville was forced to meet no uncertainties in finding the place. France had been searched for a prisoner from Charleville, and a captured motorcycle courier had been the fortunate fruits of that search. One who knew Von Kettwig's billet, the very room on the second floor where Von Kettwig slept, a room that could be identified by cracks of light from behind the drawn blinds since Von Kettwig seldom slept in these feverish days of German staff preparation for the supreme effort ahead.

The place was dark tonight. De Baudreville entered the unlatched door and was fumbling for the light when he heard some one leap out of bed and patter across the room. The lights were snapped on in a jiffy. A bewildered orderly stood blinking his disbelief of the figure before him.

"Well, what are you staring at, dummox?" demanded the officer.

"I thought the Herr Oberst Leutnant was asleep in his chamber," stammered the bewildered soldier.

"There's trouble outside, Gemeiner," said De Baudreville. "Now that you are finally awake, you will go at once to the north of the village and wait until they locate a spy who has landed. When they find him, bring me the news at once."

"*Ja wohl, Herr Oberst Leutnant,*" replied the orderly dutifully.

As the door closed on the private, De Baudreville turned to the stairway. His blood turned suddenly to water as he mounted the steps, slowly, with feet that dragged heavily, though they made no sound. He wore a high collared Prussian uniform and the house was tepid with the air of late June. Yet he was forced to set his jaw against the chatter of his teeth as he opened the door of Von Kettwig's chamber and fumbled for the light.

The touch of a button flooded the

chamber with the light of half a dozen strong incandescents. De Baudreville's stark eyes went intuitively across the map littered room to a far corner where the figure of a man reposed on an army bed. The Prussian was lying on his back, breathing heavily in the sleep of exhaustion. As De Baudreville stole upon his victim he avoided Von Kettwig's face, kept his eyes fixed upon the spot over Von Kettwig's heart where he would plunge his long, thin bladed knife.

De Baudreville lifted the blade. But it hung in the air, its polished sides glistening malignantly in the blue-white light while the Frenchman fought for mastery of a sickening qualm that robbed his power to strike. Twice he summoned his strength, tried to force his hand down. Then suddenly he knew that he could not kill thus in cold blood, not even in the name of duty.

The mysterious sentinels of intuition penetrated the Prussian's sleep with a warning. His eyes popped open. His brows knotted as he blinked slowly several times. Then a look of comprehension seemed to strike his keen mind as he raised himself calmly to his elbow.

"Quite an unexpected visitor, indeed, Herr Oberst Leutnant," he said in a perfectly controlled voice. "Or must I address you as—monsieur?"

"Lieutenant Count de Baudreville, of the French Cavalry, Herr Oberst Leutnant," said De Baudreville stiffly. "At present assigned to the French Second Section and on a mission of importance to Charleville."

Von Kettwig did not stir himself, nor did the Frenchman's terse announcement startle him. But his eyes were alert, his mind searching the danger that had brought him from his sleep in the dead of night.

"You were about to kill me, monsieur," said Von Kettwig coolly.

The eyes of the two men met evenly, without glaring, in a grim conflict of mettle.

"I have not abandoned that idea in the least, Oberst Leutnant von Kettwig," said De Baudreville. "I warn you against outcry or trickery."

A corner of the Prussian's upper lip rose in the flicker of a smile.

"You have missed an excellent opportunity, my dear Count. But I gathered from your face when I awoke that you found no taste for murdering a sleeping man in cold blood, eh? Or did the opening of my eyes disconcert your knife hand?"

The Frenchman winced.

"Perhaps I lack those qualities in which you Prussians so richly excel, Herr Oberst Leutnant," he sneered. "But I am going to give you something of a chance for your life, Von Kettwig. Of that you may rest assured."

"Thank you," said Von Kettwig curtly. "There are poniards in the hall below if they interest you."

"I much prefer pistols, Herr Oberst Leutnant. You will rise at once and prepare yourself."

VON KETTWIG did not stir. He regarded De Baudreville thoughtfully for a moment, the glint of his black eyes betraying the activity of his alert, coldly calculating mind.

"Let us consider matters, monsieur," said Von Kettwig at length. "Perhaps we can come to an amicable conclusion. You are here for information of great importance, or you would not have taken the risk. It is not difficult for me to guess your needs. Well, tell me, your government would give a great deal for that information, eh?"

"I am not to be tricked, Von Kettwig. If you do not take steps to arm yourself immediately, I shall kill you without compunction!"

The Prussian sat up without taking his eyes from De Baudreville and folded his arms.

"If you can accomplish your mission without force, monsieur, why precipitate a messy disturbance? I have a proposition that will interest you if you will but hold your patience."

De Baudreville drew a small German pistol from his blouse and released the safety lock suggestively.

"Say what you have to say as quickly as possible, Herr Oberst Leutnant. But remember you have had your warning!"

"It is a simple matter to guess, Count De Baudreville, that your great staff wishes the plans for our attack. Will we hit at Reims as you have been led to believe, or thrust down the valley of the Marne? Well, monsieur, I am a man who is ruled by my intellect and not by my emotions."

He paused to lean forward and lower his voice to a raucous whisper.

"Well, I know we are beaten," he said. "Only the blind field marshals do not foresee the end now that you have the manpower of America hurrying to your rescue. So I am willing to think of my own unhappy future—"

For a moment De Baudreville was almost convinced by a certain sinister intensity in Von Kettwig's voice, a malevolent treachery in his glistening black eyes. Then he leaped to his feet decisively.

"Enough, Herr Oberst Leutnant!" he snapped. "I warn you for the last time. At the count of ten, if you have made no move, I will shoot you through the heart!"

"I'm sorry," said Von Kettwig. "Your unwillingness to accept my words may cost the lives of both of us. It is most unfortunate that you lack the gift to know when one speaks in all sincerity."

There was neither haste nor fear in Von Kettwig's manner as he stepped to his desk, opened a drawer, took out his service pistol and examined its magazine. De Baudreville kept the Prussian covered until Von Kettwig solemnly eased a shell into the barrel of his weapon and lowered the pistol to his side in token of his readiness.

"You appear to claim the slight advantage, monsieur," sneered Von Kettwig. "If you intended murder, why did you awaken me for the unpleasant event?"

"A precaution, Von Kettwig," said De Baudreville. "The war has taught us all caution in dealing with your kind."

"What is it then that you propose, monsieur?"

"I will lower my pistol slowly to my own side. When the muzzle is at the seam of my trousers we are both at liberty to raise and fire. Of course, if you make a move as I lower my pistol, I will take the advantage of my pointed muzzle."

"Your insulting taunts give me a peculiar pleasure in killing you, Monsieur. Proceed when you are ready. I am waiting!"

Slowly the barrel of De Baudreville's pistol moved downward. Von Kettwig's relaxed into the alert agility of an animal about to spring as his gleaming eyes watched the tragic course of the Frenchman's weapon. De Baudreville's hand did not tremble. His eyes were fixed, hawk-like, upon his foeman, his body tensely rigid, every nerve straining for the quick leap into action that meant life or death.

Two vivid fangs of flame. The stone walls rang with sound, the window panes trembled behind the drawn blinds. The metallic jangle of a pistol dropping to the maple floor. A heavy object fell with a sodden plop. From just outside, the returning orderly plunged through the door of the house and rushed up the stairs, drawing his pistol as he ran. He bolted through the chamber door with popping eyes and livid face, the weapon leveled in front of him.

But the orderly's jaw dropped, his body went limp. He put his pistol sheepishly back into its holster. Seated at the table in the center of the room he saw the Herr Oberst Leutnant in full uniform, eyeing him with evident annoyance.

"What, Gemeiner Schlettstaadt, brings you to my quarters acting like a lunatic?" the officer demanded in a voice of acid.

"Your forgiveness, Herr Oberst Leutnant," stammered the soldier. "But I thought there was a shot fired."

"So there was, Gemeiner Schlettstaadt," the officer replied in a voice of reprimand. "But can not I discharge my pistol by

accident while cleaning it without driving you out of your head!"

"Your forgiveness, Herr Oberst Leutnant?"

"Perhaps, since a shot upsets you so, I should send you back to the Front where you will grow more accustomed to the sound, Gemeiner."

The private had taken refuge in the posture of a wax mannikin. His face tightened at the officer's threat. On the lower side of his blouse, to the left, was a small silver oval bearing the insignia of crossed blades over steel helmet. The medal for three wounds in battle.

"As the Herr Oberst Leutnant pleases," said the soldier.

"But we will consider that later. At present I have an errand for you if you have recovered from your panic."

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst Leutnant.* I have to report that of the spy—they have found nothing. A search from house to house has been ordered."

"Ah, indeed," said the officer, smiling faintly. "Then I am glad enough you returned, Gemeiner. You will go now to the infirmary and find the doctor himself, even if he is at his billet. Get from him a prescription that will help me to sleep. Tell him I have been working too hard, am contracting a cold and suffer with a headache. When he gives you prescriptions, you will bring them here to me. Do you understand?"

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst Leutnant.*"

The officer paced the floor slowly, smoking a cigaret, until the outer door closed and the ironshod heels of the private were lost in the distant cobblestones. Then he brought from under the bed a rigid body wrapped in a field green blanket, lifted it across his shoulders and carried it down into the basement. There he stripped it of every vestige of clothing, lifted the manhole of a cesspool and committed the lifeless clay to its forbidding final resting place.

"A neat job, with no evidence left behind," said the officer, sotto voce. His taut face broke into a somber, inscrutable smile as he returned to the sleeping chamber and set things in order.

THE OPERATIONS assistant of the German staff avoided the headquarters mess in the morning. He had a bite of breakfast at the nondescript café conducted by an obese Belgian who had refused to flee the village before the German onslaughts. Then he made his way early to headquarters in a heavy, unsociable humor that did not encourage conversation, and plunged into the mass of papers on his desk.

Reports of raids, of newly identified Allied divisons in line, of troop movements to the Front, men and animal replacements en route from Germany. Letters of instruction from Army commanders, fragmentary orders of attack from divisions, brigades, regiments, even from assault battalions. All integral parts of a titanic scheme of maneuvering a million men against Paris.

A sheaf of reports showed the fighting value of the Teuton divisions of the attack armies. Crack guard divisions of the seventh army, reserve, line, Bavarian, Austrian, Landwehr troops. An eloquent paragraph leaped up at him out of a battalion attack order:

> The battalion will attack with the 3rd Machine Gun Sharpshooters Detachment of the 64th, and after forcing the crossing of the Marne to the west of Brazy, will push on quickly after the capture of Varennes and reach its goal as indicated in Appendix A. At X plus 220 minutes—

He sat back to smoke a cigaret. The battalion order was of no value except to confirm the details of an impending general attack upon which the staff was bending every energy. Here on his desk, and in the room about him, was being assembled every detail of that attack. Its date, its tactics, its strategy, its strength and final purpose. And no matter what power, what determination of brain and brawn lay behind that attack, its hopes of success were ruined once those details were in the hands of the Allied commander.

As he leaned over his papers again, his hand went to the inner pocket of his blouse and brought forth the small silver

locket. His pulse rose as he sat gazing at the cameo-like features of the countess. The war with its red orgies and black intrigue faded into a beautiful château at the Bois de Vincennes.

From this pleasing reverie he was recalled by an abrupt voice at his shoulder. He turned to find a face close to his; the smiling blue eyes of a German officer were fixed upon the locket.

"A beauty, Von Kettwig," exclaimed the officer, a major of the staff who wore his cap at a rakish angle and smoked an imported cigaret through a long amber holder. "A friend at Köln, perhaps?"

The Oberst Leutnant responded with a look of annoyance, snapped the locket shut and returned it to his pocket.

"You sly rascal," said the major. "What would the Frau von Kettwig say if she saw that locket, eh? But, of course, I will say nothing if your lady love has a—a friend half so beautiful to whom you will present me!"

"I'm in no humor for jesting this morning," said Von Kettwig.

"Hard luck for you then, Herr Oberst Leutnant," replied the major. "For I came to tell you that you are wanted by his Excellency the General Oberst at once. Better snap into your smoothest humor, Von Kettwig!"

With a tightening of nerves, the operations assistant accompanied the major to the general's quarters, a great stone room in a nearby château, its walls covered with immense colored maps, its anterooms bustling with staff officers and orderlies. A summons from the General Oberst was as unusual as it was disconcerting, and this morning it was filled with a hundred upsetting portents.

He was a mountain of flesh topped by a square, short face that might have been roughly hewn from a slab of stone. He fixed upon the officer a pair of protuberant glassy eyes and proceeded instantly with the reason for the summons.

"His Imperial Majesty is anxious again and has sent his aide to Köln to meet with me," said the general, "I have no time to spare. You will go at once to Köln and meet with the Oberst Von Loewenfeld. Present through him my respects to his Majesty and assure the Herr Oberst that the prospects of a decisive victory were never so bright as at this hour. Take good care to give him only the most optimistic account of everything. Do you clearly understand, Herr Oberst Leutnant?"

"Yes, Excellency!"

The Oberst Leutnant executed a machine-like about and strode from the room to find a headquarters auto drawn up at the door to receive him. He had no alternative than to enter at once, and the next moment he was whirring northwest on the main artery of military travel to Liege. By ten o'clock he was passing through the fallen Belgian city, at eleven o'clock Aix la Chappelle was behind him and before noon he was entering Köln.

At the local German headquarters, the Oberst von Loewenfeld received him anxiously. A spare, withered man with an immense red face that seemed choked with blood above his tight fitting Prussian collar. His face was all nose and jowls so that he looked out through mere slits in puffy eyelids. But as the Kaiser's portable listening post, he had a voracious capacity for questions, which the Oberst Leutnant met for the most part with glittering generalities. When Von Loewenfeld finally had satiated his thirst for information of the Front, he arose in an affable mood and jerked a thumb toward the private military anteroom.

"Great good news for you, Herr Oberst Leutnant," he chuckled, a twinkle gleaming through his puffy lids. "Can you not guess who has come from Berlin in the hope of seeing you?"

"You mean—?"

The younger officer swallowed. Von Loewenfeld's sly smile spread across his obese face.

"Frau von Kettwig," he said. "I telephoned her when I learned you were to come and she arrived on this morning's express from Berlin."

"But I must return instantly to Charleville," said the Oberst Leutnant ner-

vously. "This is a critical time at headquarters, as you must perceive."

"*Ach*, what a fellow!" snorted Von Loewenfeld. "Three months since you have been home—and you howl of your haste to go to the Front. *Ei*, *Gott*, and this war must not be such an unpleasant thing, Von Kettwig. But the Frau von Kettwig is in great distress and must see you. Tomorrow will be time enough to return to Charleville!"

The Oberst von Loewenfeld took him playfully but firmly by the arm, led him across the room, threw open the door and thrust him inside. A waddling dowager of a woman, ten years Von Kettwig's senior, rushed upon him and embraced him affectionately.

"How wonderful that it is really you, my beloved Otto!" she cried. "And Carl von Loewenfeld says you need not return until tomorrow."

Even as she spoke, she sensed her husband's limp arms, the illy concealed indifference in his face. She drew back, a sudden Teuton tempest flaming in her eyes and cheeks.

"You act strangely, Otto!" she exclaimed. Her temper gained momentum as she spoke. "You act as if you didn't want to see me. You did not even pretend to embrace me!"

"Germany faces a grave crisis, my dear," he replied quietly. "I must give my whole mind to the work ahead."

"Oh, I know," she stormed. "I've always known—and now you confirm what I've known. You married me for your own selfish reason, you conniving wretch—and now you think you don't need me any longer—"

"Please quiet yourself," he pleaded. "I must not be sent back to my work with trouble in my ears to fret me."

"Well, there's trouble enough, and you'll listen to it," cried Frau von Kettwig. "Our properties in Poland are gone, the revolution takes away the last hope of our Russian securities. So I am compelled at last, Otto von Kettwig, to draw upon you for some of the funds I have lent you!"

"I will communicate with you from headquarters, my dear," he said quietly. "What you have just told me is all the more reason why I should return at once to my duty. Only a German victory will save us from walking the streets next, as I have but precious little to give you."

Her storm gave place to tears and she rushed to him to lay her head upon his shoulders and sob out a final plea.

"But you need not go until tomorrow, Otto, when I am in such deep trouble. Did not the Oberst Carl say as much—"

"Grave events call me, my dear," he interrupted.

As he spoke he slipped from her embrace, hurried from the room with a curt goodby and fairly ran to his awaiting motor.

In the open road again, his hand sought the silver locket. His face lighted as he feasted his eyes upon the picture.

"Ah, a face," he murmured half aloud, "that is like a sip of champagne to take from my mouth the taste of quinine."

UNTIL a late hour of that night, the Oberst Leutnant sat at his desk in the operations room at Charleville. Bit by bit, with an expert hand, he pieced together the scattered details of German order of battle. He worked without fear of interruption or suspicion. This was his desk of duty. When he had assembled the typewritten plans of armies, corps and divisions for the German drive, the last desperate lunge upon which they would stake all, he extracted from a lower drawer of his desk a bottle of invisible ink. With this he wrote upon the margins a vital legend:

> Date of attack, July 14-15. Artillery preparation 1 A.M. 15 July. Continues until X hour for infantry, daybreak. Number of German divisions in attack, 207, of which 126 in assault, 81 in reserve.

To that vital information, not contained in the orders themselves, he attached the signature in block letters, "De Baudreville." Then he folded the bulky sheath

into a large dispatch case, wrapped the case in a newspaper so that it would not be observed by the watchful sentry in the map room of headquarters through which he must pass, and returned to his billet.

At the billet he aroused Gemeiner Schlettstaadt, instructed him to get his side arms and field kit, and proceeded to the motor station where he ordered a car for reconnoissance. The car purred gently out of Charleville so as not to disturb the sleep of the Commander at the great château. On clearing the village it proceeded at high speed, pursuant to the Oberst Leutnant's terse instructions, southwest on the route Charleville—Le Chatelet—Reims. After crossing the Suippes, the car turned west on an improvised military road and approached Reims from northwest. On coming to the German positions in line, the officer got out of the car with the faithful Gemeiner and gave him abrupt instructions.

"An important mission, Schlettstaadt," he said. "If you listen well and do your part, perhaps I shall forgive you for your silly conduct of yesterday. The password is '*Eingriefen.*' With that you will proceed to the forward positions and then continue to the south and west, using your compass to hold your direction."

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst Leutnant,*" said the Gemeiner as his superior paused.

"Here, take this dispatch case," the officer went on. "When you have left our Front some distance behind, you will be challenged in French. Since you do not speak French, reply in German that you are a friend. It will be understood. Have no uneasiness over what follows. You will be in no great danger. The services you perform are of great importance. If you value your life, do not let this dispatch case out of your hands, until you have heard the French challenge."

"But, Herr Oberst Leutnant, it may be French—the orders—the risk—" The soldier's voice was almost one of protest.

"Do you hold your own cowardly carcass above the good of the Fatherland!" the Oberst Leutnant cut at him. "Did you know that the General Oberst himself selected you for this test because he thought you had courage? The orders you carry are to deceive the enemy who is expecting to hear from that filthy spy of theirs. It will give us victory, and yours will be a glorious reward after the war, Gemeiner Schlettstaadt."

The soldier's mind was stripped of all doubt. His heels slapped together, his hand rose.

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst Leutnant,*" he said. "I will not fail you."

The officer stood in the June starlight looking after the figure until his messenger was swallowed up in the night. Then he turned back to his car and returned to Charleville.

III

WHEN Colonel Ourq had got this far with the story of De Baudreville the dull monotone of his voice ceased, he arose from his chair and crossed the room, lighting his pipe as he went. The veil lifted, the years flashed past. Where, an instant before, I had felt myself, under the spell of the colonel's narrative, back behind the war torn lines with the venturesome De Baudreville, I now placed myself in the peaceful château of the Ourqs at Levallois-Perret. It was easy to guess what Colonel Ourq had not told. De Baudreville had won. I knew that the German army had run into a trap when it launched its drive on the Marne, that the Allied guns beat the Germans to their barrage and smothered their fire. I knew that the Germans had been betrayed. What a service indeed had been performed by De Baudreville. But I waited for the wartime espionage chief to conclude in his own good time.

He looked out the window some moments, puffing thoughtfully at his pipe before he returned to his chair in front of me.

"Without those orders, my friend, who is it will say what might have happened?" he reflected. "Perhaps we might have stopped them, out of our great de-

termination. But monsieur knows that surprise is the greatest weapon of attack —and did not some one strike that from their hands?"

"A magnificent service," I responded. "I can understand now why De Baudreville is the idol of France."

"Not the idol, monsieur," said Ourq quickly, "though a great hero because of his wealth and decorations. Can't you see that the details of what he did must be kept a secret from the world? Otherwise his life—*poof*—it would be worth nothing. There are still those of the old German secret service who would not forgive—who would come for vengeance if they but knew."

"And so the deeds of a great hero must be left in obscurity, eh? What a pity. Though his decorations must be some amends."

"Not half a dozen men know the truth, monsieur, and you must always remember that you have been sworn to complete secrecy."

"After all," I suggested, "the greatest rewards are said to be those of one's own consciousness of duty well performed. What a wonderful satisfaction must come to the Count De Baudreville when he reflects that his work saved thousands of Allied lives—if, in fact, it did not save France. My own country, too is indebted to him. The whole civilized world."

Colonel Ourq made no reply. He puffed at his pipe with a certain somber detachment.

"It was not until a few days before the Armistice that De Baudreville returned to France," Ourq broke a long silence. "Though we did not hear from him again directly after the affair at Charleville, he stayed at his post in the German lines and saw it through. He has told me since—though he talks with the greatest reluctance, a few words at a time—that he waited until he was certain of the end. A matchless bit of craftsmanship, eh? He must have merged himself into Von Kettwig's personality most convincingly and lived the life of Von Kettwig, yes? Though I can understand that in the stress of things, suspicion would not be keen since the Prussian staffs had many, many other grim things to fill their thoughts after the wrecking of their war machine on the Marne."

"A most remarkable bit of counter-espionage, indeed," I assented, when the colonel settled back to his pipe. "De Baudreville must have the consummate skill of a great actor in staging his rôles. Even with his resemblance to Von Kettwig, there are so many little traits of personality to betray one to his intimates."

"Exactly!"

Ourq shot the word at me. His jaws set and his eyes snapped as he leaned tensely towards me.

"There are few to whom I have dared tell what I think, Monsieur! It has driven me to the point of madness at times. Well, I must have your counsel on what I have to weigh, and the decision I must make one day. Perhaps too long I have delayed action. And—perhaps it is a truth that should lay buried—or dealt with far down beneath the surface. But, now that at last I have satisfied myself beyond danger of mistake, I must decide."

He thrust his face closer. I could feel the warmth of his breath upon my face.

"It is this, monsieur," he said in a vibrant whisper. "I knew De Baudreville, even to his thoughts, his moods, his every action. Well, the war changes men strangely at times, my Captain. But my intuitions were not to be cheated forever, nor madame's. Not even by the amazing cleverness of a conscienceless rogue who takes refuge in reticence, in claim of partial shellshock, who even delegates his signature to a chamberlain at his estates. It has taken years to confirm in fact what intuition told us. At every turn we are baffled for concrete facts. But at last I am certain, my captain. In the duel at Charleville it was not Von Kettwig who fell. And it is not, therefore, De Baudreville who emerged from the Prussian wreck to return to the great estates of the De Baudrevilles at Vincennes, monsieur."

The CAMP-FIRE

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

IT SEEMS pretty definitely established that the cap-and-ball pistol recently discussed in Ask Adventure in connection with the shooting of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church, was not used in that fatal affray. The following letter is one of several sent in pointing out why it could not have been:

Visalia, California

In *Adventure* for Oct. 1, 1930, Mr. I. A. Smith of Independence, Mo., asks regarding the possibility of Joseph Smith having been shot in 1844 with a Colt revolver, a partial description of which is given.

The first Colt revolvers included pocket pistols of .31 calibre made from about 1837 to 1842, but rarely, if ever, with a trigger guard in these small sizes. In 1846 or 1847 Colt resumed the manufacture of revolvers, specializing on the large size for the U. S. Army but presumably making some of the pocket sizes. At this time the revolvers were made for Colt by Eli Whitney but marked "Sam'l Colt, New York City."

The date of manufacture of the piece Mr. Smith refers to can be fairly well arrived at in the following way: Its being marked "Sam'l Colt" instead of "Col. Colt" would indicate that the barrel, at least, was made prior to 1850 when Colt received his commission as Lt. Col. in the Connecticut militia. If the cylinder stops in the cylinder are elliptical, and look as if made by a drill, the piece was made prior to 1851; subsequent to that date the notches would be rectangular. If made before 1848 there will be no roller where the rear of the hammer bears on the mainspring; if of model 1849 or

later, there will be a small wheel or roller in the rear of the hammer, and on the partitions between the nipples there will be a small projection engaging a slot in the face of the hammer, the "safety notches".

IT IS fairly safe to say that this particular revolver, having trigger guard and engraved cylinder, was not made earlier than 1844, for no record is made of such detail prior to 1842 when the first Colt Manufacturing Company went out of business, and there is no record left of Colt making or having made any more revolvers until in 1845 or 1846. The features, or lack of them, given above will positively place the date of the pistol. —G. L. CHESTER

N. B. Some time in 1848, probably, Colt maintained a small factory in the City of New York, this between the time he "fell out" with Whitney and the establishment of the works at Hartford, Conn.

Another reader's letter, consolidating the above evidence from another angle, namely, a first-hand account of the shooting, culled from a now defunct paper of that day. The letter:

Burlington, Wis.

In the Ask Adventure section of the October first issue I read with a great deal of interest the letter from I. A. Smith regarding a certain pistol, claimed to be the one which killed Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, Ill. I am enclosing copy of an article which appeared in the *American Freeman*, a newspaper published first at Milwaukee and later at Prairieville (now Waukesha, Wis.). The paper ceased publication long ago, having been as you may judge from its title, an Abolitionist organ. A bound file of this paper is in the possession of the Burlington Historical Society, of which I am a director.

While this article in no way settles the claim regarding the pistol in question, you will note that according to an eye witness Joseph Smith's body was struck by three balls as he attempted to leap from the window. How, then, could any single gun be claimed as the one which killed him? You will notice throughout the article that the writer continually speaks of bayonets and muskets. The only pistol or revolver mentioned is the one which was in the possession of Joseph Smith himself.

It might interest you to know that following the death of Joseph Smith, a resident of Burlington, one James J. Strang, laid claim to the leadership of the Mormon Church, fighting for that position with Brigham Young. While Young lead a pilgrimage to Utah, Strang gathered his adherents at a town called Voree, about a mile west of this city. Later he took them to Beaver Island. Strang, mortally wounded at Beaver Island, was brought to Voree to die, and is buried in the Burlington cemetery. Our society is this fall erecting a marker on his grave, which heretofore has been unmarked. We also plan the erection of an historical monument on the site of Voree. —O. C. HULETT

The eye witness account:

From Nauvoo Neighbor

Two Minutes In Jail—Possibly the following events, occupied near three minutes, but I think about two, and I have penned them for the gratification of many friends.

Carthage, June 27, 1844

A shower of musket balls were thrown up the stairway against the door of the prison in the second story, followed by many rapid footsteps. While Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Mr. Taylor, and myself who were in the front chamber, closed the door of our room against the entry at the head of the stairs, and placed ourselves against it, there being no lock on the door, and no ketch that is unsealable. The door is a common panel, and as soon as we heard the feet at the stairs head a ball was sent through the door, which passed between us and showed that our enemies were desperadoes, and we must change our positions.

Gen. Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself sprang back to the front part of the room, and Gen. Hyrum Smith retired two-thirds across the chamber directly in front and facing the door. A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose, when he fell backwards extending at length without moving his feet. From the holes in his vest (the day being warm and no one having their coats on but myself), pantaloons, drawers and shirt, it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without, through the window, which entered his back on the right side and, passing through, lodged against his watch, which was in his right vest pocket, completely pulverizing the crystal and face, tearing off the hands and smashing the whole body of the watch, at the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose. As he struck the floor he exclaimed emphatically—

"I am a dead man."

Joseph looked towards him and responded, "O dear! brother Hyrum!" and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand, discharged one barrel of a six-shooter (pistol) at random in the entry from whence a ball grazed Hyrum's breast and entered his throat, passed into his head, while other muskets were aimed at him and some balls hit him. Joseph continued snapping his revolver round the casing of the door into the space as before, three barrels of which missed fire, while Mr. Taylor with a walking stick stood by his side and knocked down the bayonets and muskets which were constantly discharging through the doorway, while I stood by him ready to lend any assistance with another stick, but could not come within striking distance without going directly before the muzzle of the guns.

WHEN the revolver failed, we had no more firearms and expected an immediate rush of the mob, and the door was full of muskets—and no hope but instant death within—Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. When his body was nearly on

a balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg, and a ball from without struck his watch, a patent lever, in his vest pocket, near the left breast, and smashed it in "pi", leaving the hands standing at 5 o'clock, 16 minutes, and 26 seconds. The force of the ball threw him back on the floor, and he rolled under the bed which stood by his side, where he lay motionless, the mob from the door continuing to fire upon him, cutting away a piece of flesh from his left hip as large as a man's hand, and were hindered only by my knocking down their muzzles with a stick; while they continued to reach their guns into the room, probably left handed, and aimed their discharges so far round as almost to reach us in the corner of the room to where we retreated and dodged, and then I recommenced the attack with my stick again.

Joseph attempted as the last resort to leap the same window whence Taylor fell, when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward exclaiming, "O Lord, my God!" As his feet went out of the window my head went in, the balls whistling all around. He fell on his left side a dead man.

AT THIS instant the cry was raised, "He's leaped the window!" and the mob on the stairs and in the entry ran out. I withdrew from the window, thinking it of no use to leap out on a hundred bayonets, then around Gen. Smith's body. Not satisfied with this, I again reached my head out of the window and watched some seconds, to see if there were any signs of life, regardless of my own, determined to see the end of him I loved. Being fully satisfied that he was dead, with a hundred men near the body, and more coming round the corner of the jail, and expecting a return to our room, I rushed towards the prison door at the head of the stairs, and through the entry whence the firing had proceeded, to learn if the doors into the prison were open. When near the entry, Mr. Taylor called out—

"Take me."

I pressed my way till I found all the doors unbarred; returning instantly, I caught Mr. Taylor under my arm, and rushed upstairs into the dungeon, or inner prison, laid him on the floor and covered with a bed in such a manner as not likely to be perceived, expecting an immediate return of the mob. I said to Mr. Taylor—

"This is a hard case to lay you on the floor, but if your wounds are not fatal I want you to live and tell me the story."

I expected to be shot the next moment, and stood before the door awaiting the onset.

—WILLIAM RICHARDS

ON THE purchase of commissions in the British army: an amendation to a letter by Captain Glen R. Townsend of Ask Adventure.

Hot Springs, So. Dakota

Captain Townsend fails to state that the purchase system did not exist in certain branches of the service —for instance the artillery, and, I am sure, the engineers. After the system was regularly established, this matter was simply the payment of a certain amount with each promotion. For instance, a certain number of young men graduated from the military school, Sandhurst, and were appointed ensigns in different regiments (if in cavalry, "cornet" was the corresponding rank). Before joining each had to pay to the War Department a certain sum for commission, £ 300, I think (about $1500 in our money). When his time came for promotion to a lieutenancy he had to lodge another sum of money with the War Office, and so on until a certain grade was reached, when purchase stopped.

As Capt. Townsend intimates, it was not compulsory for a man to be a graduate of a military school. He could—with a pull—obtain a "direct commission." That is, he must pass an examination and "lodge" the regulation amount of purchase money with the War Office. Not under any circumstances could a civilian purchase a commission from an officer.

BRIEFLY, it was the seniority system plus the payment of a certain special sum of money to the War Office with each step. It worked hardly on poor men, and it was probably intended to keep the poor out of the army.

A non-com promoted for special gallantry in wartime did not have to lodge the purchase money. Many a non-com appointed riding master in a cavalry regiment found it paid him far better to decline a captaincy when he was senior lieutenant and let the next senior purchase over his head—if said next was a wealthy man, which was nearly always the case in cavalry. The Captain is quite correct in assuming that the major referred to as a colonel was a Guards officer. They held a brevet in those days. The "Gazette" would refer to one as Captain and Lt.-Col. Smith of the (Grenadier, Coldstream or Scots Fusileer) Guards.

—WILLIAM C. COURTIS

AS ANOTHER comrade sees Lopez, Tyrant of Paraguay:

Brooklyn, N. Y.

When I turned up at Camp-fire tonight and heard a fellow all riled up because, he said, Edgar Young had tried to aggrandize Lopez of Paraguay — well, I was rather surprised. I had read Young's article, and I hadn't construed it that way at all. I went and read it again, but still I couldn't see it. When I had read it first, it had conjured up in my mind images of every hellion I had ever read about, and I had found myself—as I thought—agreeing with the author that Lopez was one of the worst of the lot.

I'd never heard of Lopez before, or the war he'd fought, and so my impressions of him were only what the article had given me. And he looked ugly. I

felt that I had just learned about an obscure, but one of the most tragic and shocking episodes in the cruel and bloody history of my kind. The article had brought him to me, not as a hero, but as a lustful madman, an utter egoist, a genius run riot. What a picture Young had suggested and implied, rather than drawn, of this hellish campaign and of this utter profligate! "Seven hundred thousand stalwart Paraguayans . . ." now "less than a thousand . . ." butchered, slaughtered, annihilated by the vanity, insane passion and consuming egoism of this one man. A "few aged men and young boys" . . . "two brothers who had connived to kill him, lying on the ground in mud, their feet tied to stakes . . ." ". . . his sisters, who had entered a plot to assassinate him, bound prisoners, caged in rawhide tents." "Mother, sisters and brothers had thought to save the race from extermination by getting him out of the way."

A tiger, I thought, a monster, a scourge. Five years!—and a nation dead and putrefying in its own red blood. A thousand old men and boys, half a million mothers and widows, barefoot, starving, stunned, shuddering, in a fabulous nightmare of wreck and ruin. A monster, I had thought, brought to bay at last, but alas, like all too many others of his kind—too late.

But, I have no right to interpret the words of other men for other men, and I do not mean to try to. I do not know—or care—what Lopez was to Young, or what Young wanted him to be for us. That is not my point. I was just surprised to see that Young had presented Lopez to me exactly as the other Camp-fire brother had wanted him to appear.

—G. C. RUBLE.

A FEW words from Harold Lamb relative to his historical piece, "Saladin's Holy War," in this issue. It ought to be repeated here that this, like the others of the series to follow, is an extract from the manuscript of the author's second volume on the Crusades, to be published in book form sometime in the spring.

Mr. Lamb has condensed and arranged these articles for *Adventure*, writing a special foreword in several cases, to serve both to orient the reader and to make each piece as complete in itself as possible. This will enable those of you who should happen to miss one (and you shouldn't!) to go right on with the next without losing the swing of the Crusades movement as a whole.

Probably as rich in color and drama as any in recorded history, the period covered includes roughly the years between the Fall of Jerusalem and the coming of the Mongols. Mighty figures play the leading rôles—Saladin, Richard the Lion Heart, Pope Innocent III, Baibars the Panther, St. Louis—and turbulent and stirring is the story of their exploits. None of his previous books, all splendidly received by the reading public, has offered Harold Lamb such an opportunity to display his mastery of the historical narrative. Nowhere has he succeeded so brilliantly in catching the spirit and movement of one of the world's great epics.

New York, N. Y.

The battle of Hattin was one of the turning points of the Crusades. In fact it was pretty much *the* turning point. Until then the Moslems had looked on the Crusaders as invincible in ranged battle. Even upon the eve of Hattin, Saladin's amirs had urged him to withdraw and content himself with the old policy of raiding here and there, and retreating when the Christian army of Jerusalem took the field. Saladin, however, saw his opportunity to break the power of the armored knights, and the event proved that he was right.

Various stories are told to explain the disaster to the army of Jerusalem. Some chroniclers of the time accuse Raymond, prince of Galilee, of treachery. But it is clear that Raymond kept the field until the issue of the battle was decided. He had urged the other leaders not to advance, and had gone forward with them against his better judgment.

AND later-day writers have assumed that the Crusaders of Hattin were incapable and weak compared to the men of Godfrey of Bouillon and the first Baldwins, who conquered Palestine. That is not so. Individually the men who fought their way to the Horns of Hattin were as courageous, and certainly as able soldiers, as the first Crusaders. Only a decade before Hattin the Templars had routed Saladin on the southern coast, forcing the sultan to flee at the full speed of his horse for a day and a night to escape capture. After that, Reginald, or Renault, of Kerak had transported ships across the desert to the Red Sea and sailed down the coast to raid the Moslem holy cities—a bit of sheer daring that astonished the Moslems. The adventurers from Kerak were killed or taken prisoner almost to a man, and the Arab chroniclers said, after questioning the prisoners:

"The stories they told us of their hardships and exploits almost burst our hearts with astonishment."

This exploit of the wolf of Kerak aroused Saladin and his amirs to settle the issue once for all—to risk a decisive battle after generations of border warfare.

THE Crusaders lost this battle, but not because they were weaklings. They had no leader able to cope with Saladin. The lord of Kerak and the

master of the Templars were responsible for the fatal advance toward Hattin, and Saladin, seeing clearly their mistake, hemmed in the wings of the Christian host and penned it on the barren plateau where it could not get at water.

A day and a night without water finished the Crusaders' horses, and in a few hours more the men themselves were done.

A LITTLE over a year ago I visited the battlefield of Hattin, and understood a bit of what the crusaders faced. The plateau from Nazareth to the edge of the Galilee depression is without shelter or water of any kind except occasional deep wells in the villages. The lake of Galilee lies some six hundred feet below sea level, and down by the shore of the lake—in the sunken valley—the air is bearable enough—cooled by the breeze over the water.

But on the height of Hattin over the lake the heat is stifling. The hot air from the depression seems to hang on the edge of the slope. I visited the place on a cloudy day in October. What the heat would do to a man under a clear sun, in early July—after a day's march in armor and under arms—can be imagined.

And after a day's fighting without water, and after the brush was set on fire!

A WORD as to Saladin's character. Recently the great sultan has been painted as a man merciful in all things. A kind of chivalrous saint. Saladin was more than that—a just man, and very wise. Moreover he held inviolate his given word.

There was nothing emotional in the mercy he displayed. He ordered the men of Kerak to be executed after the Mecca raid, as retribution, and the Templars after Hattin. With his own hand he struck down the lord of Kerak, as he had sworn to do.

HE GRANTED the best of terms to the Christian garrisons which surrendered after Hattin, because it was essential to him to take possession of the Crusaders' citadels before a new army could arrive from Europe to take the field against him. No, Saladin was not a sentimentalist. He was merciful beyond his age to women and children who appealed to him, while he dealt sternly with men under arms.

One of the wisest generals who ever lived, Sun Tzu, who won battles in China long before our era, said, "Never attack desperate men, and never attack men who have no way of retreat open." Saladin's policy of mercy made it easier to surrender than to resist, and we are beginning to understand how his sagacity gained more for Islam than his armies.

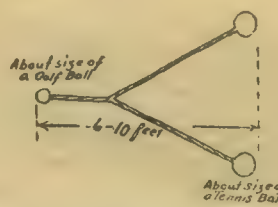
—HAROLD LAMB

MAYBE one of you Western rope experts can give this reader some dope on the "monte throw" and the "diamond hitch", as a return courtesy for his interesting note on *bolas* and Patagonian saddle rig.

Saint Raphael, Var, France

I would like to amplify somewhat the reply given in your "Ask Adventure" columns regarding *boleadors*.

In the South of S. America (Patagonia) *bolas* are still in almost daily use, the three ball variety being always employed. The actual balls themselves are made of green hide, filled, as a rule, either with gravel or—a very popular thing—broken crockery, pounded up into bits about the size of a bean, the object being to facilitate the filling of the rawhide pouch.



Thong of twisted rawhide well worked and very supple, usually one piece rolled, occasionally a four or six plat.

The three ball variety (which is the only one in use in the south) is made as per the rough sketch enclosed, the two main balls being about the size of tennis balls; and the other, which is the last to leave one's hand, about the size of a largish golf ball. We use *bolas* especially when traveling with a *tropilla* of horses, and if one of the troop insists on quitting the bell mare, we can bring him down with a flop. A few doses of that treatment allied to some education with a stock whip soon reduces a youngster to a sense of what's required.

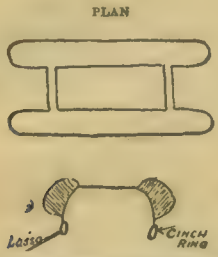
TO CATCH either rhea (S. American ostrich) or guanacho, *bolas* are excellent. One throws slightly in advance of the front legs, and completes the job either with a knife or revolver.

The single ball *bolas* are quite unknown in the South, and I can not see any advantage in its use. Curiously enough I heard of it while I was in Patagonia and in consequence made inquiries among the various Indians (Onas and Tehuelques) who both were ignorant of this type, and who, strangely enough, asked what the advantage would be. If a beast is down and more or less hog tied, surely the man can do the rest.

MAY I correct your Mr. Young on a small point of detail re the lariat? Our lassos are not attached to the back of the saddle, but to the cinch ring. He is quite correct in that our horses turn away and don't face the animal one has roped, but the native saddle consists of two pads (*bastos*), on which are slung two very short stirrups. We sit very much aft, and there is room for the rope to pass under our feet. I have always wished to

see the two systems tried out against each other at a rodeo.

From what I saw at Wembly (England), your punchers are far better at bulldogging. Riding? Well, *quien sabe?* The styles are different. But the Argentine Gaucho appears far better with his rope.



Bostos — First usual saddle blanket, then *bostos*, cinched up — then two or three sheepskins with wool on, then a sheet of soft tanned leather. To hold these we have a soft leather girth. Stirrups are usually either the small compressed horn type or cut from a solid block.

DO YOU, or do any of your readers, by any chance know what is known as the "monte throw", in which the whole rope is coiled and thrown as a coil, much as a man will throw a rope from a boat to the shore? On reaching the beast, it opens out. I only know one Indian who can do this, and he used it in the forest districts on the Chilian border, where to swing a rope was impossible.

Give us if you can a diagram of your "diamond hitch." I am not sure if it is the same as we use in the south. — H. CHETWOOD-AIKEN

P. S. If your shotgun and pistol experts care to drop me a line, I may be able to give them some interesting facts, as I inherit one of the finest collections of old firearms extant, including what we believe to be the second breech loading gun ever made.

BUZZARDS, *bongós* and *náñiguismo*.

Oriente, Cuba

Although I have been a constant reader of *Adventure* for a great many years and concur heartily in the opinion of most of your readers that the Campfire is the most interesting department of a very interesting magazine, I have never till today taken part in its discussions.

I notice a recent discussion about which opinion seems divided as to whether buzzards or other birds of the vulture family capture and eat living animals or birds. As to other types I can offer nothing. But as to the common buzzard of the Southern States, the same which is found in the West Indies, I have on several occasions seen them eat young chickens; though in my opinion, and in that of a number of Cuban *guajiros* whom I have consulted, it is not habitual. I know that on one occasion I killed a buzzard which had been eating my chickens for several days, and though there were always a number of them around, I lost no more.

I have also been told that in Costa Rica, the Central American type of buzzard, the "zopilote," sometimes eats chickens, but though I have seen thousands of them I can not say whether it is true or not, though I have no reason to doubt it.

ANOTHER matter: We who read *Adventure* like to feel that information therein is authentic, and a short article a few weeks ago by Mr. Charles A. Freeman entitled *Nañigo* makes a doubt arise in my mind. His terms, or some of them, may be perfectly correct, but it so happens that in a very long residence in Cuba I have never heard them as he writes them. For instance, the title should have been *Náñigo*, and I have never heard of or seen any drum termed *bonga*. The drum universally used at dances in the country is called, at least in Oriente Province, a *bongó*, and there is a type used I think by the negroes in Vuelta Abajo called *conga*, but if the use of them is prohibited by law as Mr. Freeman states, neither my Cuban neighbors nor I have ever heard of it. No dance music in the country, and very little in the towns, is complete without the *bongó*, and most of the dances are given under the supervision of Rural Guards.

In a Havana weekly which arrived yesterday I saw a note where some negroes had been arrested in a procession where they were beating the *conga*, the police thinking that it was a demonstration of *náñiguismo*, but on later finding that the procession had a political significance, the negroes were released. So their offense was evidently not that of using the *conga*.

Most of my time in Cuba has been spent in the eastern part of the island, where, as far as I know, *náñiguismo* does not exist, though there are cases of *Brujeria*, a kind of voodooism, which has some resemblance to the cult of the *Náñigoes* but has not its organization. — EMMET C. DIBBLE

ASK *Adventure*

For free information and services you can't get elsewhere

Crusader

MOUNTED, he was a lancer; afoot, a swordsman.

Request:—"1. What was the 'regulation' sword carried by the Crusader knights—single or two handed? If it was a case of personal preference, as is apt to be the case with a man's own weapon—and a knight did sometimes have a two handed sword—will you please give a brief description of both weapons, as to length, breadth of blade, length of grip, hilt, etc.? Was the hilt first made to symbolize the Cross, or did that naturally follow?

2. If a knight's usual battle accoutrements included a pike, sword, battle-ax, mace, dagger and shield, when and how did he use them?"

—H. M. BONNELL, Leonia, New Jersey

Reply, by Mr. Robert E. Gardner:—1. The period from the First through the Eighth Crusade, embraces the years 1096 to 1272. If we consider the arming of the knightly Crusader of the XII and XIII Centuries we must list the lance as his first and most important weapon. The sword was brought into play only after the lance had been splintered or the knight dismounted. The knightly sword with its hilt and simple quillons produced a cruciform figure but as this form of the cross antedates the Crusades and was not confined to Christian people it can not be claimed as a symbol of Christianity.

The "hand and a half" or "bastard" sword was produced in the early XV Century. This weapon, though essentially a single handed sword, was given a longer grip, which permitted the use of the left hand to add force to a downward cut. The two handed sword was not produced until early in the XVI Century. The sword of the Crusades—First to Eighth—was a straight, two edged blade usually of flattened diamond section, with the simple cross hilt. These swords varied in length, being from about 36" to 50" over all.

2. In addition to lance and sword the knight bore a mace, war hammer or *martel de fer* and was protected by a shield. This shield was carried hanging from a "guige" which passed around the neck. Thus the knight was enabled to use both hands—one to direct his mount and the other to wield his weapon.

Sea

HURRICANE lanterns, mosquito boots, and a footnote on the "Liverpool Irish", who, it seems, were the Gypsy-like hawkers who found themselves stranded in Liverpool and were a little too foxy to get on well at sea.

Request:—"1. What are hurricane lanterns?

2. What are mosquito boots that ladies are supposed to wear in the evening in mosquito time, in the tropics?

3. Why is it whenever I hear the expression 'Liverpool Irish' it is spoken with fear and dislike? The man who told me of another man—I know them both well—dropped his voice to a sort of awed whisper when he said, 'He is Liverpool Irish'."

—W. STELWAGON, Coconut Grove, Florida

Reply, by Captain Dingle:—1. Hurricane lanterns are made with a specially protected draft, and will burn in winds that other lanterns would fail in. Nowadays the best burn a gas made by pumping, much like the Primus stove. Some have a mantle.

2. Mosquito boots are usually soft leather boots lacing well up the leg, and are of many kinds. Fewer are worn than bought, though.

3. As for the term "Liverpool Irish", it originated, I believe, with the wandering Irishmen who periodically migrated to England by way of Liverpool for the English fairs and harvests. These itinerant laborers and pig dealers often went broke after paying off and infested Liverpool, seeking passage home. Many filtered into the Atlantic packets and

developed into the packet rat of sea lore. The few I met years ago were foxy, all right. The only time I ever had a blanket stolen off me in a mid-Winter Horn trip as a boy the culprit was of the ilk.

Ginseng

"ITS vertues are that it gives an uncommon warmth to the blood and frisks the spirits beyond any other cordial . . ."

Request:—"It indeed surprised me to see your letter on ginseng in July's issue. I have been most interested in this subject for a long time, but have failed to discover anything on this plant. Libraries revealed no data. I had just about given up in despair, when I came upon your note.

Here is my request: Are there any books dealing with ginseng, especially telling how and where to find it? How to prepare for market? Where could I obtain this book if there is such?"

—HARRY L. EASTON, Toronto, Canada

Reply, by Mr. Paul M. Fink:—Gray's *New Manual of Botany* gives the following on ginseng:

"*Panax quinquelifolium.* Root large and spindle-shaped, often forked, 1-2 dm. long, aromatic; stem 3 dm. high; leaflets long stalked, mostly 5, large and thin, obovate-oblong, pointed; styles mostly 2, fruit bright red. Rich, cool woods, Que. and Ont., s to N. E., N. Y., Great Lakes region, e. Ia., Mo., and along the mts. to Ga. Flowers July. Much sought for the root, which is purchased by the Chinese and extensively employed by them in their medicine."

Other treatises on botany give similar data, but in so far as I can find there are no books solely on the subject, unless the U. S. Department of Agriculture issues a bulletin on the commercial cultivation of ginseng. My list of their bulletins is at present out of pocket, but I believe a letter to them, addressed to Washington, D. C., might bring the monograph you wish.

The root is generally dug when found, and the preparation for market is simply drying in some cool spot for several weeks, until the roots have a wrinkled, shriveled appearance. Well dried tubers bring the best price, a few green ones in the lot lowering the value markedly.

TODAY I consulted a man who a few years ago raised some little "sang" for the market. The ground was prepared by moving to it a large quantity of woods earth, to simulate as nearly as possible the native soil, over this was erected a large frame some six feet high, partially covered with slats, to give mingled sun and shade, and then the seed was sowed. The main cultivation was the removal of weeds. Six years later the crop was marketed. While it was a paying crop, it was not enough so to justify him in staying in the business. He stated that in case he were to try again he would plant the seed in some woodland, where he could protect it from poachers, for there the conditions would be more nearly natural, producing larger roots, and of the type that would pass as wild, the wild root bringing a much better price than the cultivated.

"Sang" has so long been an article of backwoods produce that it is now very scarce, and finding a plant is a piece of rare luck. Thirty years and more ago my father bought hundreds of pounds of it, but now it is almost unheard of locally.

In his "Writings" Col. Byrd of Westover (circa 1730) pays this tribute to ginseng:

"Its vertues are, that it gives an uncommon warmth to the Blood, and frisks the spirits, beyond any other Cordial. It cheers the heart of even a Man that has a bad Wife, and makes him look down with great Composure on the crosses of the world. It promotes insensible Perspiration, dissolves a Phlegmatic and Viscous Humors that are apt to obstruct the Narrow Channels of the Nerves. It helps the Memory and would quicken even Helvetian dullness. 'Tis friendly to the lungs, much more than Scolding itself. It comforts the Stomach, and Strengthens the Bowels, preventing all Colicks and Fluxes. In one word, it will make a man live a long while, and very well while he does live. And what is more, it will make Old Age amiable, by rendering it lively, cheerful and good humored."

If all that be true, what a pity that the Chinese have a monopoly on its use!

South America

MR. BARBOUR, who has only recently returned to this country, advises young men without funds to stay out of South America at present. The southern countries have been hard hit by the slump in commodity prices.

Request:—"I am looking for work in South America and any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

I am a high school graduate and have had about a year and a half of college training."

—J. R. PRICE, JR., Owensboro, Kentucky

Reply, by Mr. William R. Barbour:—I am sending this same answer to all correspondents who ask as to the possibilities of employment in Latin America. The large number of letters I am receiving, from all over the United States and Canada, is an index of the business and employment depression in this country.

Taken as a whole, Latin America is in a worse financial slump than is the United States. The recent political disturbances in Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentine, Brazil, Santo Domingo and Haiti are traceable in large part to bad economic conditions.

The world-wide slump in prices of commodities has hit every country in tropical America. *Sugar:*—Cuba, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico. *Coffee:*—Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Central America. *Sisal:*—Mexico, Cuba, Haiti. *Cotton:*—West Indies, Colombia,

Peru, Brazil. *Metals* (copper, tin, silver, etc.):—Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Chile. *Cacao:*—Santo Domingo, Venezuela, Ecuador. *Grains:*—Argentine, Uruguay. *Animal products:*—Argentine, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia. *Petroleum:*—Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, etc. *Rubber:*—Brazil, Bolivia, etc. And so it goes. Some commodities are the lowest in ten years; others have touched an all-time low mark.

As a result, all these countries are retrenching. Some are nearly bankrupt. The construction of roads, railways, and other public improvements, has either slowed down or been entirely stopped. American construction companies are sending very few men to South America at present.

Another factor which makes it difficult for an American to obtain employment in South or Central America is the immigration from Europe. Most Americans hope for employment along mechanical lines. Good mechanics from Italy, France, Germany, driven out of their homes by unemployment, have flocked to South America, where they are willing to accept work at low wages and to live at a standard much below that to which Americans are accustomed. Most of these men either know Spanish or can pick it up in a few weeks; they come out to join large resident colonies of their own countrymen, which maintain semi-official relations with their homelands and act as employment bureaus.

Certainly I would not advise any American to go to Latin America hoping to find work. In no case go unless (1) you have a tight contract for employment with a solid concern, or (2) have enough funds to keep you some months and bring you back home again.

Though employment conditions are admittedly not good in the United States just now, a man without capital is better off in the U. S. A. (or Canada and Australia) than anywhere else in the world. Let down the immigration bars and see what hordes of work-hungry men would flock to our shores. If you have ample capital it is different; there are very many opportunities for profitable investment in Latin America, more now than when times are flourishing.

Filibuster

IT IS obvious that the following letter by Mr. Young is not intended to conflict with Mr. Barbour's advice. In a way it completes the picture: South America, unfortunately, may have openings for machine gunners . . .

Request:—"I note by the papers there are several fracases going on in South America. I went overseas with the bunch and have had a varied experience. I'm not out for glory but hard cash. Do you think I would have a chance as a machine gunner anywhere down there? How about an officer's commission? Are they liberal in this line?"

—D. L. MILLER, Palmyra, Pennsylvania.

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—About the only way to catch on as an officer or machine gun runner in any of the disturbances in S. A. is to go there and look about on the spot where the fracas is occurring. There is almost invariably a chance to get on if things are hot. There is a law against foreign countries recruiting men here in the U. S. for such work. If you have the fare to get down there and will do some maneuvering around and get in touch with the leaders you would have little difficulty in making connections. However, regarding the money end, it is better to have foresight enough to pick the winning side or to get money in advance beforehand, for there is no collecting back pay from the losers.

Mine

HOW to stake and file a claim in the United States and Canada.

Request:—"1. What is the necessary legal procedure in filing a mining claim in U. S. and its territories and Canada?

2. Has a mining claim a definite area?"

—CYRUS A. JORDAN, St. Louis, Missouri

Reply, by Mr. Victor Shaw:—1. Legal staking of a mineral claim operates differently in U. S. possessions and in Canada.

For the U. S. A.: Under the general Federal law, each claim is staked in a rectangle to measure 1500 feet by 600 feet, laid out along the strike of the vein. For fractions, side lines must be parallel. Each corner must have a post 4 inches square and 4 feet above the ground, bearing its consecutive number. Discovery stake same size and erected on the vein at point of discovery. Stone monuments may replace stakes, if found necessary. Any number of claims may be staked, and held, providing the required $100 annual assessment work on each is kept up. Location notice must be fixed (closed tin can is good) to discovery post; giving name of claim and of locator, date, and statement that the ground is hereby claimed for mining purposes. Copy of location notice must be recorded in 30 days at recording office for the mining district.

2. Some States have cut the Federal area allowance of 20 acres to 10 acres, the claims measuring 1500 x 300. Certain mining camps also cut this down again.

In Canada mining claims are all 1500 feet square, for lode claims, with every corner a right angle. Staked same as in U. S. with compass bearings given from each post to next. Three posts are erected as nearly as possible on the line of the vein; of which the discovery is one, and the others mark the outer boundaries. Filing must be inside 15 days from date of location, 1 day allowed extra for each 10 miles

after the first 10, from claim to nearest recorder's office.

No license required in U. S. A. Canada however requires a $5 annual license, called a "free miner's certificate".

In U. S. a placer claim contains 20 acres. In Canada it varies according to type, since there are 4 classes: creek diggings, 250 ft. along stream by 1000 ft. wide; bar diggings, 250 ft. square; dry diggings, same as last named; also precious stone diggings.

Get Canadian mining laws, also all literature from The Dominion Bureau of Mines, Ottawa, Canada.

'Coon Dog

IF YOU want a good hound for treeing 'coons at night it is best to arrange for a trial hunt before completing the purchase.

Request:—"I would like very much to know where I can buy a 'coon dog, a *tree dog* for night hunting, one of the medium sized breeds, of gritty, intelligent qualities? Possibly you know of such hounds.

Bird hunting is 'out' in the Catskills. No quail! Grouse plentiful where there is food but grouse are now protected until next year. (Not protected from natives or vermin.) Pheasants plentiful, but ruinous to setters. Hounds used a great deal for these running birds, à la wild turkey."

—H. B. BARTLETT, NewYork City

Reply, by Mr. John B. Thompson:—Frankly I am going to advise you just as I feel, so that you will get the dog you want, considering that there is such a difference of opinions on the subject of 'coon dogs. I would advertise in a good sportsman's weekly which has a large circulation in the region from which you want to draw your prospect, telling just what you want.

The only way to do is to purchase the dog on ten days' approval, you to pay express both ways in case of refusal. This is the custom. You can deposit the amount of purchase with your bank to be turned over to the seller in case of acceptance. I have been handling and training dogs for thirty years and feel this is the most satisfactory way to do business, for the dealer a man recommends may deliver properly several times, and thereafter not, and yet it may be the buyer's fault as well as the dealer's. That is why I always decline to recommend any particular 'coon dog breeder.

Marines

THE CORPS is overstrength and recruiting practically closed.

Request:—"I am interested in joining the Marine Corps—and am especially interested in aviation. What are the rules governing enlistment and where is the nearest recruiting station?"

—BERNARD KARNER, Essexville, Michigan

Reply, by Capt. F. W. Hopkins:—Recruiting in the Marine Corps is practically closed, only chosen reenlisted men at present being accepted. Many of the recruiting stations are being closed.

There are no special enlistments being made for aviation. All aviation details are made from the regular line after the recruit training is completed. Selection is made, to fill any vacancies, of the men most fitted and least in need of training, as there is a greater supply than demand at this time.

Enlistment in the Marine Corps must be in the regular line with no special assignment or promised duty (except band duty) term of four years; discharge can not be secured by purchase. Age from 21 to 35, unmarried, good moral character, must be citizen of U. S. (born or fully naturalized) must never have been convicted of a crime, never discharged from any U. S. Service other than honorably. Must present, in form of letters, etc., evidence to recruiting office, of good character and morals. Must read and write. Must have affidavit of date of birth or a birth certificate. Must have no one dependent upon him for support.

Height about five feet six and up, weight about 140 pounds and up. Normal eyes and color perception, normal hearing, sound teeth with at least four opposing molars, no broken bones, missing members, skin disease, no chronic or organic illness or tendency to illness, must have good general health.

Young men between 18 and 21 may be taken if recruiting officer sees fit if they furnish affidavit from both parents or guardian, giving consent.

As to recruiting stations, they are closing them so fast now I can not advise you which is nearest. Write to the Officer in Charge, U. S. Marine Recruiting, Chicago, Ill., and he will advise you.

Sorry that I can not promise a hearty welcome for you, but the Corps was, last week, a little over strength, and if Congress cuts the Navy down as the press reports, the Corps will have to stand its share. Heaven knows it's small enough now and duty is plenty hard as it is, as most ships and stations are short handed.

Australia

DR. STAREK, traveling round the world on horseback, is no stranger to the readers of *Camp-Fire* and *Ask Adventure.* Australian travel conditions vary with the seasons, and it is almost impossible to lay out an absolute course; but it seems safe to believe that after traversing Siam his expedition will find arid territory pleasant by contrast.

Request:—"As introduction we mention that we are Austrians traveling round the world on horseback since 1926 and have so far come on horses from Vienna, Austria, to Singapore and are now on the way to Java and Australia. Our plan is to sell here in Singapore our horses (8 in all) and go on rail through

Java, thence from Sourabaya on ship to Port Darwin.

In Darwin we intend to buy horses and cross Australia from Port Darwin to Adelaide. First we will follow the railway line and then the overland telegraph as far as Lake Woods, thence swerve off to the 130° east of Greenwich which degree we will follow till the junction of the degree and Warburton's route to Mt. Freeling, cross the McDonnell Ranges to Charlotte Waters and then on to L. Eyre, follow the railway line to Port Augusta, Adelaide.

What country is it like between Darwin and L. Wood? Between Lake Wood and Lake Eyre?

What about water conditions, grazings for horses?

Is there in the interior any shooting to be had in order to supply a small caravan with fresh meat?

What about aborigines?

We give you here a short account of our aims and plans together with a short description of ourselves so that you may more easily answer our questions.

WE TRAVELED through the most difficult countries such as Kurdistan, Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Central Asia, climbed over the Pamir (roof of the world), Eastern Turkestan, China, Desert of Taklan-Makan, Tibet, India, Burma, Siam and Malaya. We have a fair knowledge of desert traveling, having traveled nine months in the Arabian Desert, five months Persian Desert, four months Taklan-Makan Desert, are experienced caravan people, used to camping; as a matter of fact lived exclusively in tents all the way from Vienna to Singapore with the exception of towns and places where other accommodations, hotel or bungalow, are to be had.

We set up the record on horseback to Singapore and will set up another one from Darwin to Adelaide on horses. We are cinematographers and press-photographers with a large camping-outfit (six pack-pony loads). Our present caravan is eight ponies strong, 6 pack-ponies, 2 riding horses. We are used to privations and all sorts of hardships, so you needn't be afraid in the choice of a suitable route for us. What we want is to see the interior as well as the towns along the railway lines."

—DR. J. B. STAREK AND MRS. STAREK, Singapore

Reply, by Mr. Alan Foley:—I have read your letter with a great deal of interest, but it is not within the scope of my ability to reply to the questions which you raise.

The reason of this lies in the fact that stock routes in Australia are regulated according to the existing seasonal conditions, and because of this it is not desirable to endeavor to forecast the best route to take. The only safe method for you to adopt will be to make inquiries from the inhabitants of the sparsely populated districts through which you will pass.

These inhabitants are the only people qualified to give definitely instructive and helpful suggestions for travelers, because observation and experience both enable them to give more dependable information for your guidance.

There are a few points, however, that will be safe for me to touch upon. The first of these is the fact that the overland telegraph route would be the easiest to follow, providing water supplies are available along the way, and there is very little doubt that water would be abundantly available now because this route is well established.

Reasonable shooting should be had in the major portion of the territory through which you pass, but this would not apply to the desert country.

The aboriginals for the most are friendly and harmless, although there are a few isolated tribes in the Northern Territory who are inclined to be belligerent. For the most part, however, a plug of tobacco and a pinch of salt will soothe the warlike feelings of our local warriors.

I am sorry that I cannot be of more assistance to you, but it would manifestly be unsafe to tender advice upon a project such as yours, unless one was quite sure of all data.

The country is so large, the seasonal influence is so variable, that you will have to be guided by the conditions which arise as you journey from point to point.

Health

TWIN banes of the casual outdoorsman: impure water and poison ivy.

Request:—"1. What is a good way to determine if water is pure?

2. What can you do in a case of poison ivy?"

—BILL REESE, Magna, Utah

Reply, by Dr. Claude P. Fordyce:—1. You can tell if water is pure only by a physician's examination. Play safe and boil all drinking water furiously for five minutes. It can be cooled in a desert water bag.

2. Washing it out with alcohol is best. Use rubbing alcohol. The poison of the ivy is an oil and must be removed as such.

Motor Boat

THE proper power for a twenty-footer.

Request:—"I am taking this opportunity to settle some problems which have arisen in the course of my construction of a motor boat. Said boat is twenty feet over all, has a 5′ 10″ beam and the hull when finished will weigh about one ton. I intend to use this boat on the San Francisco Bay and as yet am undecided as to what type motor to use.

The specifications call for a Universal 4 cylinder motor, but I do not feel like spending as much money as is asked for it. I am seriously considering using a Liberty Aero Motor converted for marine use but do not have adequate information regarding such a motor.

1. Where and from whom may a Liberty Aero Motor be purchased?

2. Can the Liberty Aero Motor be obtained in the 8 and 6 cylinder type?

3. How fast would these motors drive a boat as above, with an 11" propellor?

4. What is the approximate cost of these motors?

5. Do you believe such a motor as the Liberty Aero would be advisable, or would you recommend some other make of motor?"

—JOHN FINIGAN, San Francisco, California

Reply, by Mr. Gerald T. White:—If the specifications of your boat call for the installation of a four-cylinder Universal motor it is almost beyond belief to feel that a Liberty airplane engine could be installed.

There are several sizes of Universal fours, but I hardly believe any of them develop over 40 H. P. The regulation Liberty motor develops 450 H. P. Such an engine is only suitable for boats designed purely for speed. Power of this amount in the average 20 foot boat would turn it over immediately. If the boat was designed for that amount of power the speed would be considerably over 60 miles an hour.

As far as the Liberty sixes and eights are concerned, I do not know where you could get one. There were never many of the type and most of those that were placed on the market were snapped up by racing men and ruined within a year or two.

If you cannot afford a Universal, why not buy a good automobile motor and have it converted in a thorough manner for marine purposes? You can obtain conversion parts for Ford model T and A engines from The Barker Factory, Norwalk, Conn. Conversions of some of the Continental motors can be obtained from the Gray Marine Motor Co., Detroit.

Conversion parts for some of the airplane engines can be obtained from the Auto Engine Works, Minneapolis, Minn.

Leper Island

COULON, south of the Philippines, is isolated and almost self-sustaining.

Request:—"I should appreciate it if you could give me some information regarding employment on the Government Leprosy Islands. I understand that they have guards there, mostly ex-service men. There are three of us, a marine, sailor and soldier. We are to be discharged soon and would like very much to get employment on such an island as guards. Could you give me the information as to where to apply for such a job?"

—LOUIS TRIAL, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Reply, by Mr. Buck Connor:—The Coulon Leper Colony is directly under the United States Health Department, headquarters in Washington, D. C.

This colony is located in the southern part of the Philippine Islands, and is almost completely isolated from outside associations, and I can not recall whether there are any guards to keep persons away or to keep persons there, or not. But I think not.

In the main this colony is almost self-supporting, growing its own gardens and having other minor manufacturing units.

The most direct information pertaining to the subject of which you ask is to write directly to Dr. Vicinte de Jesus, Director of the Philippine Health Service, Sta. Potenciana Building, Manila, P. I.

Regarding salary, hours, isolation, and the other features of that branch of the Health Service, you will have to secure it from Dr. Jesus.

Photo

PRESERVING films in the tropics.

Request:—"I expect to make a rather extended trip through Central American jungles in the near future. How can I best preserve my negatives after they have been developed?"

—L. L. COBB, Teague, Texas

Reply, by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—Your films should be packed *before* use in sealed tin boxes, one roll to a box, the lid either soldered on or sealed with surgeon's—not electrician's—tape. After use, put them back into the same box, *and do not seal*. Your hypo, too, should be sealed; use the crystal form, and seal the same as you do your films, but seal this each time you open the package to take any out. It's very deliquescent, and in a damp climate will take up enough moisture from the air to make itself into a solution.

Derringer

A GENTLEMAN'S weapon, expensive, handsome and deadly.

Request:—"Was the Derringer pistol in use during the year 1850?

The libraries and museums in San Francisco give no information regarding the earliest date for the Derringer, although one, on exhibition, is tagged 1860."

—HUGHES CORNELL, San Francisco, California

Reply, by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—I will do what I can for you *re* the Derringer and its period of popularity; I may add that I frequently carry one still, when I wish a very light pocket arm.

I find from Captain Dillon's book that Derringer was in the firearms manufacturing business early in the days of the West; Sawyer states him as being born in 1785. One gun by him bears the date 1826, I think.

His famous pistols seem to have been made early in the percussion era; I have read that they were carried by some officers in the Mexican War. Of heavy bore, excellent construction, and neat and even beautiful workmanship, they were a gentleman's weapon in every sense of the word. I believe their use began about 1835.

I have seen some fine sets of these pistols; made up to match each other, in fine walnut cases with bullet mold, powder flask, and cleaning tools; they were an

expensive and deadly weapon. Some sets had barrels of two different lengths, both being capable of using the same stock and lock, such as one barrel of three inch length, for pocket use, and one of six inches, for belt, dueling, or target use.

I think they were greatly favored by gamblers, and Bret Harte speaks of them in places, if I err not. Some fine sets were made by Derringer for George Curran, a pioneer gunsmith of your city, and a set of them is in the possession of a friend of mine in Portland, Oregon, in perfect condition.

Later Derringers were made by Colt, Williamson and Remington, my own being a two-shot .41 caliber cartridge gun, but the early historical pistols were percussion lock weapons. I don't believe any were ever made with flintlocks.

Insect

THE caddice fly, a neat little fisherman that thrives in brooks.

Request:—"I have often noticed small masses of stones under larger stones in streams and find small insects in them. What are these? Can you tell me something of their habits?"

—F. B. MARTIN, Plainfield, New Jersey

Reply, by Dr. S. W. Frost:—The little insects that you have noticed under stones are the larvæ of caddice flies.

There are a large number of different species. Some of them build cases of stones while others build cases of sticks, dead wood, moss and in fact a large number of different materials. The larvæ feed upon small organisms that live in the water. Some build minute silken nets that are used to gather these organisms and are neat little fishermen. When they are mature they close their stone case or house with a small stone and change to a cocoon. Later in the season a small four winged caddice fly emerges from the water and flies away. These caddice flies are frequently seen about streams and are often attracted to lights in the summer time. Their long antennæ and hairy wings help to identify them.

READERS of *Adventure* will be sorry to learn of the death of Charles Bell Emerson, expert on Central America and the West Indies. Almost from the beginning of the *Ask Adventure* department, Mr. Emerson was on the staff, and in this capacity he generously shared his vast knowledge of the lands he knew. His home (no matter where he moved during the years) was always affectionately dubbed *Adventure Cabin.* We have all lost a great friend.

Our Experts—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

1. **Service**—It is free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.

2. **Where to Send**—Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. DO NOT send questions to this magazine.

3. **Extent of Service**—No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.

4. **Be Definite**—Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.

A Complete list of the "Ask Adventure" experts appears in the issue of the fifteenth of each month

THE TRAIL AHEAD

The next issue of
ADVENTURE
December 15th

GORDON YOUNG
Offers a thrilling novelette of the Old West

TALBOT MUNDY
Continues his new novel of Jimgrim

GEORGES SURDEZ
Tells us of a hero of the French Foreign Legion

HAROLD LAMB
With us again in another brilliant Crusades narrative

S. B. H. HURST
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